

The HOUSE *on the* HILL



MARGARET R. PIPER



Class PZ7

Book C353 Ho

Copyright N^o

COPYRIGHT DEPOSIT.

THE HOUSE ON THE HILL

BY MARGARET R. PIPER



Sylvia's Experiment: The Cheerful Book
(*Trade Mark*)

Net \$1.35; carriage paid, \$1.50

Sylvia of the Hill Top: The Second Cheerful Book
(*Trade Mark*)

Net \$1.35 ; carriage paid, \$1.50

The Princess and the Clan

\$1.50

The House on the Hill

\$1.50



THE PAGE COMPANY
53 BEACON STREET, BOSTON, MASS.



“ TONY STOOD STOCK STILL AND STARED AT THE STOWAWAY.”
(See page 118.)

THE HOUSE ON THE HILL

BY

Mrs. MARGARET R. PIPER *Chalmers*

AUTHOR OF

"Sylvia's Experiment: The Cheerful Book,"
Trade Mark

"Sylvia of the Hill Top: The Second Cheerful Book,"
Trade Mark

"The Princess and the Clan," Etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY

ELIZABETH WITHINGTON



THE PAGE COMPANY
BOSTON ❁ MDCCCCXVII

PZ 7
C 353
H. O

Copyright, 1917, by
THE PAGE COMPANY

—
All rights reserved
—

First Impression, February, 1917



\$1.50

MAY 31 1917

©CL.A 462777

no. 1.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I THE LAMBERTS	1
II THE HOLIDAYS	14
III GETTING ADJUSTED	26
IV "OF MANY THINGS"	35
V "FAIR AND WARMER"	48
VI BEFORE THE FOURTH	57
VII THE END OF THE CELEBRATION	69
VIII THE FOURTH	80
IX THE "SLOUGH OF DESPOND"	92
X THE WAY TO FAIRYLAND	103
XI TONY DISCOVERS	115
XII DICK	127
XIII THE SPELL OF FAIRYLAND	136
XIV ENTERTAINING EVELYN	145
XV THE ROUND TABLE	158
XVI WATER 'SCAPES AND CONFESSIONS	169
XVII DR. PHIL'S FOURTH	180
XVIII THE FAMILY CATASTROPHE	191
XIX SOME MORE OF THE SAME AND LARRY	201
XX DISAPPEARANCES	212
XXI TONY VENTURES	224

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
XXII	OF HUNCHES AND SO FORTH . . .	236
XXIII	THE GREAT SECRET	246
XXIV	A STATE OF WAR	259
XXV	THE TEST	271
XXVI	THE FEUD	284
XXVII	PREPARATIONS	298
XXVIII	THE BANQUET	313

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

	PAGE
“TONY STOOD STOCK STILL AND STARED AT THE STOWAWAY” (<i>See page 118</i>) . <i>Frontispiece</i>	✓
“JEAN THOUGHT SHE HAD NEVER HEARD SO MUSICAL A VOICE”	42 ✓
“HE SMILED DOWN AT HER”	87 ✓
“WITHOUT A WORD PHIL FLASHED INTO THE WATER”	171 ✓
“DR. PHIL CAME OVER AND PUT A KIND HAND ON THE BOY’S SHOULDER”	218 ✓
“SHE WHIRLED AROUND WITH SCARLET CHEEKS AND ANGRY EYES”	261 ✓

THE HOUSE ON THE HILL

CHAPTER I

THE LAMBERTS

“CHAR-LEY! Charley! Charley Lambert! Where are you?” called Clare from the hall.

The twins always shouted for everything before they looked for it on general principles, even when the lost article was the missing half of themselves.

“Here I am,” and Charley lifted a tumbled brown head from among the hammock cushions on the porch and put her finger in the place where she left off in her book.

“Where’s here? Oh, there you are!” Clare appeared in the doorway, looking so precisely like her twin—middy blouse, black tie, brown pigtail, dancing blue eyes and all

—that an uninitiated onlooker might have thought he was seeing double. “Mother says for us to hull these berries quick so we can have shortcake for supper.”

Charley sat up and shut her book.

“I love shortcake, but oh, you hulls!” she paraphrased. “Bring ’em over here. I’m too lazy to get up.”

Clare obeyed, and the two were soon ensconced in the sailor hammock with the great bowl of luscious scarlet strawberries between them.

“Oh, dear, don’t you wish we’d been born boys so we wouldn’t have to do housework? I bet Phil’s off somewhere having a good time.” Charley paused to nibble a particularly tempting berry and meditate on the inequalities of sex discrimination.

“You are half a one, anyway,” laughed Clare. “You’ve got a boy’s name.”

“Much good that does me. The real thing’s feminine enough and ugly enough in all conscience. Charlotte Cordelia Lambert! Ugh! What a mouthful!”

“No worse than Clarissa Elvira,” retorted

her twin. "I don't see whatever possessed Mother to let Aunt Charlotte name us. She might have known the result would have been fearful and wonderful. Thank goodness *she* isn't our mother! She'd have more than forty cat-nips a moment, I'm thinking. Doesn't seem possible Mums could have had a sister like that, does it?"

"Maybe it's because Mother got married," opined Charley.

"That settles it, Charley. *We'll* get married." And Clare brought her fist down so emphatically that the bowl all but capsized.

"Supposing nobody asks you?" suggested a new voice from the steps.

"Oh, Phil! How you made me jump!"

"Where have you been?" The twins usually talked in chorus. It saved time.

Phil deposited himself on the piazza railing and proceeded to fan himself with his cap. He was the only boy in the family, a fact which he frequently pretended to deplore but, as a matter of fact, he rather enjoyed his prerogatives as the sole male of the group and submitted with fairly good grace to the

alternative courses of tyranny and admiration, teasing and petting, which he received at the hands of his four sisters.

“Come, hold my hand, darling,” invited Clare roguishly, extending her berry-stained fingers in his direction.

“Go to the juice,” he replied tranquilly, leaning forward, however, to purloin some berries.

“Where did you say you had been?” pursued Charley, bent on information.

“Didn’t say, but since you are so kind as to ask I don’t mind telling you I’ve been driving with Dr. Phil. Heard the corkingest news, too!”

“What?”

“Tell us.” Thus the chorus.

But Phil chose to be provoking.

“You would be so excited you would never get the berries done if I told you. Guess I’d better not.”

“Aren’t you mean?”

“Keep your old news. Bet it isn’t worth hearing.”

“Isn’t it though? Just you wait and see.

It's the most exciting thing that's happened on this Hill for many a day, I tell you that, Miss Charlotte Cordelia Lambert."

"Twinnies, aren't the berries ready?" asked Mrs. Lambert from the doorway.

"Just a wee minute, Mumsie." And Clare's fingers flew to make up for lost time.

"Come out and take a breathe," invited Charley.

Mrs. Lambert stepped out. To an outsider she would have appeared simply as a middle-aged, rather plain woman, with graying hair and singularly fine eyes. But to her children "Mumsie" was the loveliest lady in the land.

"Where have you been, Phil? Didn't Father ask you to mow the lawn?"

Phil's hands came out of his pockets and he gave vent to a whistle.

"Clean forgot all about it," he apologized. "Sorry. I'll do it after supper."

"Phil's forgettery is dreadful long," interpolated Charley slyly. "He's the laziest! I b'lieve he forgets on purpose, don't you, Mums?"

Mrs. Lambert shook her head and smiled at her son.

"No, I don't think that, but I do think he needs to shorten the 'forgettery.' How about it, Son?"

"Maybe," said Phil, noncommittally.

"Help the girls with the berries now. Father will be here in a minute."

"Oh bother!" For Phil hated to do "girls' jobs" as he called it. "They're almost done."

"Help them and they will be done sooner," smiled his mother as she went back into the house. She had a way of smiling when she gave orders, but the orders had the way of getting obeyed also. Phil shrugged but joined the girls since needs must.

"Good enough for you, Sir Lazy Bones!" exulted Charley.

"Do tell us your news," begged Clare.

"Jewett's have got a boarder," he offered with a grin.

"Pooh! We've known that three hours, haven't we, Clare? I don't call that exciting."

“Her name is Ericson and she’s from Boston,” supplied Clare. “Is that all you know?” disappointedly.

“Not by a long shot. But, since you’re so mighty particular, I’ll keep my really choice bit to myself.”

“Twins, aren’t you ever going to get through with those berries?”

Unlike the mother’s, the new voice from the doorway had a sharp edge to it.

“Come and do it yourself, if you’re in such a tearing hurry,” responded Charley pertly, as Jean, the oldest Lambert, joined the group.

“I’ve been getting supper. I can’t do everything, can I?” snapped Jean. “Phil, stop eating those berries.”

Whereupon, Phil, driven to extremes by the dictatorial tone, helped himself to a generous handful of fruit. Jean had the unlucky knack of rubbing the younger children the wrong way.

“Done!” cried Clare, springing up, and, in her haste, upsetting the basket of hulls.

“There! I never saw such careless children in my life,” groaned Jean to whose

housewifely soul the disorder on the clean porch was a positive physical pain. "Go and sweep that mess up before supper," she added sharply.

But Clare ran past her sister with a laugh.

"Orders thankfully *not* received," she called back from the hall.

Jean followed with severely disapproving countenance.

"Cross patch! Draw the latch!" mocked Charley. It had always been one of the family complications that the twins aided and abetted each other in all pursuits. If one was naughty it was all but inevitable that the other would be, too.

"Mother—" began Jean as the procession reached the dining-room.

"Mums," interrupted Clare, "I spilled the hulls on the piazza and I'll sweep 'em up the first thing after supper—the *hull* of 'em."

"Very well, dear," tranquilly.

"And, Mums, I wish you'd please tell Jean she isn't our boss, if she is three years older."

"She's always pitching into us," put in Charley aggressively.

“Mother, those children get ruder every day. I think—”

“That will do for all of you,” said Mrs. Lambert decisively. “Every one of you get ready for supper. Father’s coming into the yard.”

And presently they were all assembled around the supper table, a cheerful, not to say hilarious, group. Friction was rarely permanent in the Lambert family, and was indeed not permitted to manifest itself at meal-times, which were usually gala seasons. Jean was rather silent to-night and still slightly aggrieved, but Phil and the twins and the garrulous small seven-year-old Eleanor, made up generously for any omissions of conversation on the part of the oldest daughter.

The twins, remembering they had not extorted Phil’s news, returned to the charge. This, being an irresistible opportunity to tease, he continued to withhold his information, at the same time shrewdly aggravating his sisters’ curiosity until it nearly reached the boiling point.

“Why don’t you ask me?” intervened Mr.

Lambert presently. "I've been talking with Dr. Philip myself."

"Hurray! Father knows!" Charley clapped her hands gleefully. "You can keep your old secret now, Phil Lambert. You needn't be so smarty, either."

"Gently! Gently!" said Mr. Lambert. "Shall I tell, Phil?"

Phil gave a slightly crestfallen grunt of assent. He had not counted on having the wind taken out of his sails from that quarter.

"I don't care," he managed to add good-humoredly.

"Go ahead. It is your story. Only get it over with quickly before the twins go up in spontaneous combustion."

"There are three more children coming to live on the Hill," announced Phil.

"My goodness!"

"Goodness me! Who? Where?" added Charley.

"They are Holidays, and they are going to live at Dr. Phil's."

"Edward Holiday's children?" asked Mrs. Lambert of her husband.

“Yes, the Colonel has been ordered to some remote post on the border and decided to send the children East to their grandmother.”

“Poor souls!” muttered Charley, almost under her breath. “Are they girls or boys?”

“Assorted,” grinned Phil. “Two boys and one girl. Laurence is about Jean’s age, I guess, and Antoinette is fourteen and Ted is twelve.”

“Just like us.” Chorus, in unison.

“The saints forbid.”

“Where have they been living?” asked Clare, while Charley paused to shake her fist at her brother.

“I think Colonel Holiday was stationed near Yellowstone Park,” said her father.

“Fancy living next door to a geyser! Haven’t they any mother?”

“She died when the youngest boy was born.”

There was a moment’s hush. To the young Lamberts the idea of life without a mother was next to inconceivable.

“Oh, Mumsie!” sighed Clare. “Aren’t we glad we have you?”

Her mother smiled back understandingly, then turned to Jean.

“Did you know Miss Ericson was an artist?” she asked.

Jean’s rather somber face lit with a quick flame of interest.

“Is she?” she asked eagerly. With all her heart Jean longed to be an artist herself and the news that one of the profession was a next door neighbor was almost breath-taking in its possibilities.

“The Hill’s getting mighty popular. Father, I went riding with Dr. Phil this afternoon and forgot to mow the lawn.”

“Where did the doctor go?”

“Over to the Four-Corners to see a man who has typhoid fever.”

“What if he had forgotten to go?”

Phil colored, catching the drift of his father’s remarks, and took a hasty swallow of water to hide his discomfiture.

“And what if Mother forgot to see that you had three meals a day? What would you think?”

“That the world was coming to an end, I

guess. Please, don't try it, Mums." And Phil shot a merry but half shame-faced glance at his mother.

"What do you suppose Mrs. Holiday will do with three children under her own roof?" wondered Clare. "She thinks *we* are bad enough, across the street."

"Good for her," promptly from Charley.

"On the principle that affliction is good for the soul?" teased her father.

"Now, Daddy Lambert, that is horrid of you. How dare you call us afflictions?" And Charley shook her head reprovably at her father.

"They say afflictions never come singly. You twinnies are a shining example of that bit of wisdom," chuckled Phil.

CHAPTER II

THE HOLIDAYS

IN the big house across the street a more sedate company was gathered for the evening meal. Here were more mahogany and cut glass and fine china but less light-hearted talk and gay laughter. The Reverend Edward Holiday disposed of his food abstractedly and in silence, his fine old face wearing the far-away expression which meant his mind was already occupied with his next Sunday's sermon or possibly a new chapter on "The Mysticism of the Puritan Religion." Philip, his son, was also somewhat absorbed in the consideration of a perplexing case he was trying to diagnose. As for the handsome, austere lady who was dispensing perfect tea in exquisite china cups that had been in the family for four generations, a faint frown had settled on her forehead and presently she sighed portentously.

Dr. Holiday, or Dr. Phil, as he was known all over the county to distinguish him from his father, looked up with a smile.

“What is it, Mother? The children again?”

“Yes. I cannot help dreading their coming. It is hard to change one’s way of life at my age,” plaintively.

“Anybody would think you were a hundred instead of being the handsomest, well preservedest lady in the state.” Her son Philip was the only person who ever dared tease Mrs. Holiday. From him she tolerated, though did not encourage, pleasantries.

“I do hope they won’t be lively children,” she sighed.

Dr. Phil threw back his head and laughed aloud at this.

“Don’t cherish vain hopes, lady Mother. Children who aren’t lively don’t deserve the name. They are going to be a Godsend, I think. You and I and Father are getting to be about as set as tombstones and nearly as gay. We need livening, don’t we, Father?”

Dr. Holiday, Senior, came out of his trance.

“No doubt we do, Philip,” he agreed. “I often envy Neighbor Lambert his brood.”

“I can’t say I share your enthusiasm. If Ned’s children had had any bringing up it would be different.”

“My dear Hester, surely you do Ned scant justice,” remonstrated her husband mildly. “The children may have missed some refining home influences, but, if I know Ned, they have been trained in the essentials.”

“Oh, no doubt he has done the best he could under the circumstances, but he is only a man, and an army post is certainly a very undesirable place to bring up children.”

“Exactly Ned’s contention,” put in her son. “That is precisely why he is sending the children to you.”

It was a tactful speech and the frown relaxed.

“For my part, I am mighty glad to have the youngsters,” he continued. “Poor kiddies! We mustn’t forget their mother—”

“Philip, unfortunately we cannot forget their mother but, at least, we can refrain from mentioning her.”

“Commend me to the prejudices of a real New Englander,” thought Philip. “Poor Laura! The possession of all the virtues in the universe wouldn’t atone, according to Mother, for the damning fact that she was a public singer.”

A few days later he went to New York to meet the children who had come East in the care of an officer’s wife. As speedily as possible he transferred them from the hotel to the Grand Central Station and thence to the New England train. It was not until he had them settled, bag and baggage, boys and girl, that he had time to study the newcomers.

Opposite him diagonally with his face pressed close to the window, watching the scurrying landscape, was Edward Holiday, the third, familiarly known as Ted. He was a round-faced, blue-eyed, cherubic-looking youngster and appeared surpassingly innocent and docile as he sat there very quietly. But Dr. Phil, remembering his brother’s warning, “’Ware Ted. Don’t let his angel looks fool you for a minute,” smiled inwardly.

Directly across, sat his niece, Antoinette, also very quiet, but very alert and observing, and altogether too much like her beautiful mother to be very reassuring, considering Mrs. Holiday's prejudices in that direction. There was something so radiant, so flamelike in the child's rich, dark loveliness that more than one passenger turned to note and comment, and her uncle scarcely wondered at it. Beside him, next to the window, was the older boy, Laurence, tall, thin, blonde, Ned over again at fifteen, and already possessed, as his uncle had discovered, of his father's poise and charm of manner.

"Personalities every one of them," reflected Dr. Phil. "Not a nonentity in the bunch. I'll warrant the livening process. I'm glad Ned put them in my hands instead of Mother's. Penny for your thoughts, Antoinetta," he added aloud.

Antoinette flashed one of her quick, glowing smiles at him.

"They are not worth buying," she said. "Just a jumble. That is a pretty name you called me. Where did you get it?"

“Just came to me. What is it your father calls you? Tony?”

“Tony. Everybody calls me that. We—none of us—use our Sunday best names. We are Tony and Larry and Ted.”

“Tony and Larry and Ted
Came out of the West, it is said,
Like young Lochinvar,
And I reckon they are
Quite as likely to raise the old Ned,”

he improvised solemnly.

Ted turned from the window with lively interest and Tony giggled appreciatively.

“Why, that is just like Daddy!” she cried happily. “He is always making up funny rhymes about us. He calls us ‘lazy Larry’ and ‘touchy Tony’ and ‘terrible Ted.’ ”

“Enlightening adjectives,” smiled her uncle. “I’ll make a note of them for future reference since you are going to be my guard-ees.”

Ted shot his uncle a quick appraising glance, which suggested that he was surmising how his “terribleness” was likely to fare.

“Daddy says we are a dreadful lot,” further confided Tony. “He is afraid we will shock Granny fearfully. Do you think we shall?” a little anxiously.

“I never count my shocks until they are generated,” her uncle temporized. “That remains to be seen.”

“Tell us about everything,” ordered Ted expansively.

“Hm-m! Where shall I begin? We live on Holiday Hill, named after us, as you will perceive. We look down on the rest of the world.”

“How toploftical!” reproved Tony, beginning to enjoy herself hugely with this jolly young uncle who talked such delightful sense and nonsense all mixed up like Alice in Wonderland.

“Isn’t it? And when you feel *our* breeze blowing up from *our* lake you will think Holiday Hill is the greatest place in the world to live.”

“Is there a lake?” eagerly from Ted, and even the silent Laurence turned to listen with evident interest.

“Certainly. Holiday Lake, at your service. We have all the modern conveniences at Dunbury.”

“And are you and Grandfather and Granny all the people who live on the Hill?” interrogated Tony further.

“Oh, no, we aren’t quite so exclusive as that. The Lamberts and the Jewetts live there, too. The Lamberts have a big family and the Jewetts have a big farm. You will enjoy both.”

“Tell us about the Lamberts,” eagerly from Tony.

“There are five of them besides Mr. and Mrs. Lambert. Mr. Lambert owns the biggest store in the village and Mrs. Lambert owns the biggest heart. They both neighbor the whole town. Then, there is Jean who is sixteen or so and the best little housekeeper you ever clapped eyes on. Next in order comes my namesake, Philip, who is fourteen. You will all like him. He is quite a special chum of mine. Then there are the twins, Charley and Clare—about your age, Ted. Charley is a girl, by the way, though you

might not guess it from her name. They are as alike as two peas except that one has one dimple and to'ther has two."

"Which is which?"

He made a disclaiming gesture.

"My dear Tony. Ask me something easier. You will have to assort the dimples for yourself. Lastly there is Eleanor, a bewitching little fairy whom the others spoil royally between them."

"It sounds awfully pleasant," sighed Tony. "I've never had any girls to play with. And Daddy says we'll love the house."

"You ought to. It has been the home of a Holiday for two hundred years and more."

"Oh, I like that." And suddenly Tony felt, for the first time, the flare of ancestral pride in her heart; felt, too, that at last she was going to belong somewhere.

"So do I," echoed her uncle heartily. "Those old Holidays were a fine lot. Not so easy to live up to to-day, eh, Larry?"

Laurence turned and his grave gray eyes met his uncle's.

"I've always found it quite hard to live up

to my father. I never thought much about the rest of them."

"I understand that. I have often felt that way about your grandfather."

"Daddy thinks he is the finest man in the world," said Tony quickly with shining eyes. "Oh, I do wish we would hurry up and get there. I can't wait."

At last they did get there, and the three children were lined up for a more rigorous and critical inspection than they had received from kind Uncle Phil. This first interview with their grandmother was something of an ordeal all round. Tony, especially, who cherished a passionate fondness for loving and being loved, eager to throw herself into the arms and the affection of her grandmother, was chilled and repulsed by the perfunctory "pecky" kiss she received and the rather icy scrutiny to which she was subjected. She could not know how vividly her resemblance to her mother called back unfortunate and bitter old memories, nor could Mrs. Holiday possibly suspect how poignant was the disappointment she herself aroused. Tony's ideas

of grandmothers were of gentle, gracious, gray-haired beings such as flourished in story-books and who had nothing in common with this painfully erect, awesomely handsome, black-haired personage who was somehow masquerading under the title.

“She isn’t a bit grandmotherly,” sighed the little girl to herself, dejectedly. “I’ll never, never be able to stand being bored through and through with those dreadful black eyes.”

The boys, having expected and imagined less, came out better. Larry, being so exact a counterpart of his bonny father, could hardly help winning his way straight into his grandmother’s heart, though her habitual reserve forbade her betraying the emotion she really felt. And Ted, being like nobody but his happy-go-lucky, fearless self, occupied neutral ground.

But Tony had her full share of satisfaction in her grandfather’s greeting. He was sincerely glad to see Ned’s boys, but the little girl he drew into his arms with a fervor of affection which brought the tears to her eyes. Here, too, the past was busy. For there had

been a little girl of his own, years ago, who had been lent for too brief a space and for whom the old man's heart was still very tender. Tony was little Hester over again to him, and doubly welcome for that reason.

CHAPTER III

GETTING ADJUSTED

CHILDREN adapt themselves with wonderful facility to a change of environment, and it was a surprisingly short time before the young Holidays were practically at home in their new surroundings. They lost no time in getting acquainted with Holiday Lake, the Jewetts' large farm, and the Lamberts' large family, and found all three much to their liking as their uncle had prophesied. Phil and the twins were speedily their bosom companions, and few indeed were the days when the whole group did not foregather somewhere on the Lambert premises, on the big hospitable porch, on the tennis court or yard, or in the shabby living-room. Less often they assembled at the Holiday house. Its mistress was a bit too austere and eagle-eyed to be exactly conducive to joy unconfined, and her presence was apt to be felt as a restraint.

“There’s fun everywhere, ’cepting at home,” was Ted’s verdict.

And though it was Ted who was oftenest in open disgrace with his grandmother on account of his thoroughly irrepressible, slangy heedlessness, Tony and Mrs. Holiday didn’t exactly “hit it off” either, and much of the time what Larry called “a state of armed truce” existed between the two.

“I honestly try to love her,” Tony confessed once to her uncle in a moment of confidence. “But she just holds me off at arms’ length, and I feel as if she were disapproving of me every blessed minute no matter what I do or don’t do. And I simply can’t stand being disapproved of. It just wilts me.”

Dr. Phil smiled at the lugubrious plaint and made light of the grievance, but in his heart he wished his mother would meet the child’s advances more nearly half way and forget after all these years that she was her mother’s daughter. It was not that she was unkind. She was scrupulously kind, even forbearing, but there was a conscious reservation in her attitude and Tony sensed the

lack of warmth and rebelled against it, for love was an essential of her eager, affectionate, young spirit. Larry went his quiet way, faring the best of the three, partly because of his likeness to his father and partly because he was, by nature, less riotous than the others. On the whole, the adjustment went on on both sides rather better perhaps than might have been expected, and Colonel Holiday hearing only favorable reports, if somewhat guarded ones, felt satisfied that he had done quite the best thing in sending the children home. He suspected that a certain amount of repression might not be a bad thing for the younger children, at least, and knew that under his brother Philip's eye things could not go very badly.

Trained in all kinds of outdoor sports and having practically lived outdoors all their lives, the children found that the lake offered new possibilities of enjoyment and achievement. They already knew how to swim more or less, but canoeing and rowing were unexplored delights.

“Phil’s going to teach me,” announced Ted, one morning at breakfast. “He can row like a son of a—”

“Edward,” warned his grandmother, with uplifted brows.

“Yes’m.” Ted looked up innocently. “I was going to say, like the son of a sea captain, when you interrupted.”

Tony almost giggled but took a swallow of water instead.

“I want to learn too. I can, can’t I, Uncle Phil?” she asked eagerly.

“Of course you can. Every girl ought to know how to swim and row and all the rest of the outdoor things she can manage. I’ll give you a lesson as soon as possible.”

“This morning?”

He laughed.

“No procrastination about you, young lady. So be it. Rowing lesson number one at ten o’clock sharp. See that you are on hand.”

“Antoinette cannot go this morning, Philip,” Mrs. Holiday intervened as she folded her napkin with her usual precision. “I have a task for her.”

Tony's eyes flashed and her red lips drew into an ominous pucker. To tell the truth, she was not much used to having her imperious will crossed and did not at all enjoy the process. Just this minute it seemed the one desirable thing in all the world was to have Uncle Phil give her a rowing lesson at ten o'clock. She looked to him for assistance but he basely deserted.

"Oh, all right," he acquiesced. "To-morrow then, at the same hour."

He smiled at Tony, and somehow the smile made the pout unpout itself, though she couldn't quite smile back.

"I believe she did that just to be mean," she thought resentfully. "Wonder what the task is. Something horrid, no doubt." And she set her lips rather mutinously.

She was soon enlightened as to the nature of the task. Her grandmother summoned her and led the way to Tony's own bedroom. Such a pretty room it was, too! Tony had loved it from the first moment she had stepped foot in it. It was all apple-blossom chintz and dainty white furniture with pale gray

and rose rugs and gray wall paper with an apple blossom border. A perfectly charming room, but—! Mrs. Holiday went straight to the white chiffonier and threw open the top drawer, disclosing, alas, a heterogeneous jumble of ribbons and ties and gloves and handkerchiefs, all in disconcerting disorder.

“There!” she announced.

Tony hung her head. She had no idea how really shocking her untidiness was to her fastidious grandmother, but she did perceive the incongruity between the unsightly drawer and the dainty room. The other drawers likewise suffered similar disillusioning inspection and the closet door was made to reveal its skeleton also. But that was not the end.

“There are holes in nearly all your stockings,” went on the inexorable voice. “What did you expect to put on when you needed clean ones?”

“Why—I don’t know,” confessed Tony blankly. “Anne always mended them or I had new ones. I don’t know how to darn them myself.”

“Antoinette Holiday! How old are you?”

“Fourteen,” meekly.

“And you cannot even darn your own stockings. It is—incredible!” And Mrs. Holiday looked as if she had discovered her granddaughter guilty of all the seven deadly sins simultaneously.

“But nobody ever showed me how,” protested Tony, flushed cheeked and slightly defiant. “Daddy always said he would rather I should be out of doors than fussing over things like that.”

Her grandmother dismissed the argument with a wave of her hand.

“My child, your father is only a man. He has evidently let you grow up about as helpless and useless as is humanly possible.”

Tony bit her lip and her eyes filled. She couldn't bear to hear her beloved “Daddy” blamed. She swallowed hard to keep from saying any of the angry, rebellious words which crowded up dangerously near the surface. Possibly her grandmother mistook her silence for submission. At any rate, she continued more kindly.

“But we shall change all that at once. You shall learn to darn and sew and cook and do all the things a gentlewoman should be expert in.”

By almost superhuman effort Tony forebore to scream aloud that she didn't want to be an expert gentlewoman and that she would far rather learn to row and paddle a canoe.

“But it's vacation,” she faltered in substitution.

“I should judge you had had fourteen years of vacation,” said Mrs. Holiday dryly. “A change may be beneficial. Now, I am going to leave you to set your room in order, and when you have finished come downstairs with your stockings and sewing materials and I will teach you how to darn.”

Whereupon she retired with dignity, and Tony, waiting only until the door closed, threw herself upon her bed and indulged in a tempest of angry tears.

“I just hate her—hate her—hate her,” she sobbed. “And I don't want to learn to darn my darned old stockings—so there! Oh, Daddy—Daddy!”

But half an hour later it was a subdued and apparently docile Tony who presented herself to her grandmother for the promised instruction. And if the latter noticed that the child's eyes were red and her cheeks hot, she was far from realizing that these were battle signs and that a creditable victory had been won.

And thus began the rather strenuous process of turning Tony into a "gentlewoman" while her brothers, with the freedom of their sex, disported themselves unhampered on the lake.

CHAPTER IV

“OF MANY THINGS”

AFTER a strenuous morning on the lake, practicing the gentle art of rowing under Phil's tutelage, both pupils and instructor were enjoying a breathing space, letting the boat drift idly along shore under the shade of the overhanging shrubbery.

“Whew! But it's hot,” groaned Ted, mopping his forehead.

Phil laughed.

“You go at it in such hammer and tongs fashion. Larry gets along better because he is more deliberate. You spend all your energy catching crabs.”

“H-mp!” grunted Ted, not very well pleased. He was used to getting ahead of his quieter brother in out of door sports and did not particularly relish being the inferior. “I don't care. I'll learn yet. See if I don't. I always do things I set my mind on doing.”

"Wish I did." And Phil leaned out of the boat to break off a branch of black birch which he proceeded to chew meditatively.

"What, specially, would you like to do?" inquired Ted, recovering his good humor as he cooled off.

"Several things. One of 'em is to go out with the crowd the night before the Fourth."

"What do they do?" asked Larry.

"Oh, cut up all kinds of ructions—steal people's fences, ring bells, mix up everybody's property generally. It's loads of fun."

"Let's go," said Ted with enthusiasm. "Sounds good to me."

Phil grinned a little.

"Your grandmother might have a thing or two to say about that."

"I guess if you can go she ought not to mind our going."

"But I can't. That is—not with permission." Phil threw away the stripped bit of birch and fell to examining the rowlock critically.

"Oh." Ted began to see.

"Dad's awfully down on that sort of

thing," went on Phil. "He's town constable among other things and I guess he wouldn't like to catch me in the racket. Anyway, I'm mighty certain I wouldn't care to be caught."

"Gee! I'd like to go! Wouldn't you, Larry?" If there was a spice of the illicit about the project the fact made it gain rather than lose in attractiveness in Ted's eyes.

"Don't know," said Larry dubiously. "Maybe Uncle Phil wouldn't like it any better than Mr. Lambert does, and we aren't very likely to have a chance to get in on it."

"What people don't know doesn't hurt 'em. Right, Phil?"

Phil nodded soberly. Nothing more was said, but all three knew that a tacit dare had been thrown down and that two at least of the three were likely to take it. Suddenly Phil glanced at the sun and reached for the oars with an exclamation:

"Let me," urged Ted.

"Got to get there quick. Father told me to hoe the vegetable garden this morning and I haven't done a lick."

Under Phil's swift even strokes the boat

shot through the water and was speedily at the landing. He had no mind to lose any time on the way for he knew he couldn't plead his "forgettery" this time. His forethought was a bit tardy, however, for as he fastened the boat the noon whistles blew. There was no chance to get in any gardening before dinner and he only hoped his father would not notice his sins of omission and counted, in that case, on getting the work done before supper time.

"The garden looks fine, Phil. I don't know when it has been so thoroughly done," observed Mrs. Lambert, during the course of the meal.

Phil laid down his fork and stared blankly at the speaker. Sarcasm was not one of his mother's usual weapons. To his amazement, she met his rather sheepish gaze with a beam of genuine approval. At the same time, Charley, sitting next to him, stepped significantly on his foot, and stooping in pretense of capturing her napkin whispered, "Keep still. We did it." And, wondering still more, he subsided.

After dinner he pursued the twins to the kitchen for enlightenment.

"We did it for fun," giggled Clare.

"Your face was a study," gurgled Charley.

"Well, upon my word, you two are the biggest pair of ninnies!" expostulated Phil. "Nice fix you've put me in."

"Ungrateful!" reproached Clare mockingly. "See what kind, loving, little sisters you have."

"Rats!"

"You are so appreciative, I am sure you are dying to wipe the dishes for us." And Charley's eyes betrayed her malicious delight in getting her brother so securely in a trap. "Remember, 'the garden never looked so thoroughly done.'"

"If we hadn't done your work you would have received a tall lecture," put in Clare for good measure.

"Don't know but I'd about as soon get a lecture as feel like a fool," gloomily. "See here, I'll wipe your old dishes, but you needn't think you bribed me into it. I don't

care if you do tell. I've half a mind to tell, myself."

Charley dropped a handful of silver into the pan with a vigor which sent the soapy water splashing in all directions like a new kind of fountain.

"Phil Lambert, we never tell tales, and you know it!" she protested indignantly.

"Phil, do get out of the kitchen. The twins never get anything done when you are round." This from Jean standing in the dining-room doorway.

"He is going to wipe our dishes. Don't discourage him," explained Clare.

"He is!" incredulously. "I'd like to know what mischief you three are up to. You look too innocent altogether."

"Nothing but a spasm of brotherly love on Phil's part. He has 'em occasionally," replied Charley. "Here's a towel, dearest."

Phil shrugged but accepted the towel Charley held out to him. Jean shook her head dubiously, and, beating a retreat, met her mother coming to find her.

"Jeanie, do you mind going over to Mrs. Jewett's with the pattern I borrowed?"

Jean brightened perceptibly. Indeed she did not mind. She had been wishing for a week for some pretext to take her into the charmed circle of the artist's presence.

"All right, Mother. I'll run up and make myself presentable and go right away."

Ten minutes later she stood before her mirror, neat and trim, in a fresh blue linen dress. But the little familiar pucker was back on her forehead.

"Oh, dear," she thought disconsolately, "if only I were the least little bit pretty. The twins don't care a bit about their good looks, and Tony Holiday is a beauty, and I don't believe she even knows it. And I'd rather be pretty than 'most anything in the world and I'm as plain as—as mud," she finished disdainfully.

Presently she crossed the strip of wide green which separated the Lambert property from the Jewetts', and walked in at the side door, in true neighbor fashion, without knocking. Mrs. Jewett was invisible, either in the

big, spotless kitchen or in the little sitting-room beyond. Accordingly, Jean kept on to the front porch where she discovered, not the buxom and garrulous Mrs. Jewett, but a slim young woman in white, with the loveliest gold brown hair and delicately pink and white coloring like apple blossoms. Jean was shy, and, though she desired exceedingly to make the acquaintance of this entrancing personage, was on the point of retreating softly when the entrancing personage looked up and meeting Jean's gaze smiled pleasantly.

"Oh, how do you do?" And Jean thought she had never heard so musical a voice. It fairly transformed the commonplace words. "Did you want Mrs. Jewett? She has gone to her sister's for the afternoon. I am keeping house. Won't you stay and 'visit' with me? I am Marjorie Ericson. And you, I think, are one of my neighbors."

"I am Jean Lambert." The neighbor managed to introduce herself.

"Oh, yes, I know that. I assure you I know all about the Hill people. I have



“JEAN THOUGHT SHE HAD NEVER HEARD SO MUSICAL A
VOICE.”

pumped Mrs. Jewett high and dry on the subject. Do sit down. I was just wishing I had some one to talk to."

Jean sat down and somehow found her habitual awkward shyness mysteriously disappearing. It was a surprisingly short time before she was chatting as freely as Miss Ericson herself, considerably more freely indeed than she had ever talked to any one in all her life, for Jean was a reserved and over self-conscious person who ordinarily found it very hard to express her thoughts and feelings even to her nearest and dearest. But this gracious stranger discovered the magic key to the secret garden and, before she knew it, Jean was pouring out her dreams and hopes and ambitions to a sympathetic listener. In turn, Miss Ericson described her own trials and joys as an incipient artist, and, altogether, the two managed to become very friendly indeed. Presently the clock in the village struck four and Jean sprang up with a dismayed exclamation.

"Why, I've stayed the whole afternoon!" she cried. "I don't think I ever talked so

much all my life at a stretch," she added with a shy little laugh.

Miss Ericson smiled back.

"I have enjoyed it. I have a friend who tells me I would rather talk than eat. It is a sort of feast in itself when I get somebody congenial. You must come often to see me and bring the others. You know I am supposed to be taking a rest this summer and my fingers itch so to be at work I have to exercise my tongue instead."

And then good Mrs. Jewett bustled on the scene, full of voluble inquiries as to how her guest had "got erlong" and interspersed bits of gossip about Sister "Marthy" and the five children. Jean seized the first lull in the monologue to effect her departure. Mrs. Jewett bored her horribly at times anyway, and to-day, after the wonderful talk with Miss Ericson, the eddy of platitudes was all but unendurable.

"Jean's a good girl," commented Mrs. Jewett when she was out of hearing. "She's her mother's right-hand man about the house. Ain't a thing she can't do. But she's a queer

piece, not a mite talkative and friendly like the others, sort of standoffish like. She can draw right smart. You'd orter see her pictures."

"She has promised to show them to me."

Mrs. Jewett opened her eyes wide.

"Bless my soul!" she ejaculated. "You must have made friends mighty quick. She's usually shy enough about showing her stuff. Likely your being an artist makes a difference."

Jean went about her supper preparations that night as one in a trance. There were no discords and clashes to-night. Happiness is a wonderful peace-keeper. As soon as the work was done she crept off to her own room to dream her dreams alone. Miss Ericson had promised to help her with her drawing but somehow that was the least of her joy. The proffered friendship, the ready understanding and sympathy meant even more to her. With Miss Ericson at hand, she felt sure everything was going to be different. The breaking through of the crust of her reserve was an epoch in the girl's life.

“Mums, we are going over to see Tony. Phil’s got a headache and a grouch and won’t play tennis.” Thus Charley announced her departure.

“All right, dear. Be home by half-past eight.” And Mrs. Lambert went to hunt Phil and see if she could do anything for the head. She found him curled up on the couch in the living-room, a little grumpy and suffering. To tell the truth, the garden affair still made him a bit uncomfortable, for he was an honest lad and not used to sailing under false colors. He submitted to his mother’s ministrations with scant grace. His head felt better under the touch of her cool firm fingers but his conscience didn’t.

“I am afraid you were out in the hot sun too long with the garden and rowing, too.”

That was a little too much. Phil sat up abruptly.

“I didn’t weed the garden at all. The twins did it.”

“And you let me think you did? Why, Phil!”

“I didn’t mean to. I was going to tell and

Charley stopped me, and afterwards it seemed silly to make a fuss about it."

"Does your telling me seem silly?"

"No-o. I guess I feel better, now it's out of my system." He smiled at his mother a little ruefully.

"So I suspect. I thought there was something the matter, though I didn't know what."

"You did?" he grunted. "You have awful seeing eyes, Mumsie. Honest, I'm going to turn over a new leaf, only my leaves never stay turned. I'm an awful shirk about work, and maybe—about some other things," he added shamefacedly.

CHAPTER V

“FAIR AND WARMER”

“WHO wants to go driving with me? I have to go over to Ridgeville,” inquired Dr. Phil at dinner the next day.

“Me,” said Ted.

“I,” said Tony.

He laughed.

“I’ll take the most grammatical.”

“That’s me,” boasted Tony.

“Sh-sh! You’ve spoiled it. I think you are elected, however. Ted went last time, didn’t you?”

“Guess so. I don’t care anyway. I’m helping Phil build a rabbit house. Say, but this is a corking place! Something to do every minute.”

“Edward, I do wish you would learn to use the English language,” admonished his grandmother.

“I will if you will stop calling me Ed-

ward," was the rather astounding and very prompt rejoinder. Tony gasped a little, wondering what would happen. Ted didn't mean to be impertinent, she knew, but it sounded dangerously near it. Mrs. Holiday was one of the persons of whom most people stood in awe or else couldn't endure. Children, she frequently cowed or drove to mutiny. Upon Ted she had neither of the two effects. He wasn't in the least afraid of her nor did he resent her domination as Tony did. He gazed at her now in perfect assurance that she would take his proposition in good part, and somewhat to the surprise of the rest she did.

"Very well," she agreed after a moment's rather weighty pause. "See that you keep your side of the bargain."

"Of course we'll both of us forget sometimes," said her grandson comfortably. "But we'll have a stab at it anyway."

And even Mrs. Holiday smiled faintly while the rest shouted with mirth.

Later Tony snuggled contentedly down on the seat beside her uncle behind Gypsy's fly-

ing hoofs. Dr. Phil loved horses and still insisted on keeping them instead of an automobile. And Tony, who loved them too, didn't at all wonder at his whim, and felt the exhilaration of Gypsy's swift pace, for the doctor's horses were "long on speed," as the neighbors said.

"Granny tells me you are taking a course in domestic arts," said Dr. Phil presently, glancing down at his niece with a twinkle in his eyes. "How do you like it?"

"Uncle Phil, may I say exactly, precisely, what I want to?"

"Fire ahead."

"Well, then, I loathe, detest and abominate your old domestic arts!"

"Highly! Tightly! They aren't my domestic arts. They are yours and Granny's," he teased.

"Don't laugh, Uncle Phil. 'Tisn't funny to me. I simply hate it. It just makes me boil all over," vehemently and with a toss of her head and a flash of her dark eyes.

He sobered at that.

"Did you tell Granny that?" he asked.

"No, I didn't. I just hung on to my temper like grim death though, not to let go. I just thought of Daddy as hard and fast as I could or I'd surely have exploded. Truly, Uncle Phil, I don't think she had any right to go poking round in my chiffonier drawers to see what they looked like."

"Gently, Antoinetta. Look before you leap."

"Well," she admitted with a flush, "maybe I oughtn't to have said that. Maybe she has a sort of right because it's her chiffonier."

"Better right than that, lassie. She's your own Granny and she wants to help you grow into the refined, educated woman we all hope you are going to be."

"Uncle Phil!" reproachfully, "I thought you would be on my side." And there was a stormy little emphasis on the "you." "Even you don't understand," she moaned.

"Oh, yes, little girl, I understand perfectly. You don't suppose I have lived with Granny all these years without understanding, do you? I understand that you and she have a whole lot of adjusting to do before either one

of you is ready to admit the other's good qualities. It isn't going to be always an easy performance for either of you. But you are both going 'to make a stab at it,' as Ted says. How about it, Antoinetta? You aren't going to be a rebel, are you?"

"No-o," sighed Tony. "I'll try not to be one, Uncle Phil, but I do just hate house things. I'd much rather be out doors."

"We are not going to curtail the out doors by any means. I hope I'm too good a doctor to permit that. But these summer days are long. Isn't there going to be time for both? If you could learn to keep your father's house in order—cook his meals and all the rest of it—wouldn't it be worth some temporary sacrifice?"

It was the right note and Tony's eyes shone response.

"Oh, yes," she cried eagerly. "I'd love that. I'd be so glad and proud."

"Of course you would, and so would he. Doesn't that put a new face on the matter, young lady?"

"Yes, it does. If Granny had talked to me

like that I wouldn't have been a rebel,” truthfully.

He smiled.

“There are all kinds of domestic arts, Tony, and the greatest of them is understanding what the people you see every day are really like underneath and learning to judge them by the inside instead of the out, just as you would a—butternut, for instance.” A tall tree by the roadside supplied him his comparison.

Tony giggled at that. She thought her grandmother was a good deal like a butternut. Then she grew sober as she remembered that the application was just as appropriate to herself.

“We've both got very hard shells,” she admitted out loud, “but maybe we're sound inside.”

“Not a doubt of it,” said Dr. Phil heartily. “Just you go in for the domestic arts business—all kinds—in the same spirit you went at your rowing lesson, this morning, and I prophesy miracles will happen before the end of the summer.”

So it happened the next morning when her grandmother summoned Tony to a lesson in cookery she was greeted by a perfectly cheerful "All right, Granny," and heard never a word of the fact that she had disturbed plans for a rowing trip down the lake with the boys. And, to her surprise, Tony discovered that cooking was a mysteriously fascinating pursuit, not a bit the drudgery she had supposed it. She thoroughly enjoyed beating the frothy whites of the eggs until they looked like sea foam, and thought the rich, yellow batter in the blue bowl "simply luscious," as she informed her grandmother enthusiastically. She could hardly wait for the cake to emerge from the oven, and possibly could not have survived the suspense if she had not in the meantime been initiated into the solemn rites of mayonnaise. Her delight was unbounded when she was permitted to supply the oil, drop by drop, with artistic moderation.

"Why, Granny, I think it's just loads of fun," she burst out. "I'd rather cook than do anything I know."

“There is more to cooking than cake and salad dressing,” her grandmother informed her, but in her heart Mrs. Holiday was scarcely less anxious than Tony that the cake should be a success. And when it finally came out of the oven and out of the pan, golden brown, even, perfect in every respect, she was not ill pleased at Tony’s shout of glee and the spontaneous kiss which fell on her cheek in celebration of the great moment.

Next came the frosting, that most critical of operations. And though Tony was scared by her grandmother’s warnings of the exceeding difficulty of getting it “just right,” she managed to turn out a very creditable confection which, under rigid supervision, she transferred to its destined resting-place on the “perfect cake.”

“You have a cook’s hand, child, light and firm,” Mrs. Holiday condescended to accord as she set the cake in the pantry to cool.

And considering that this was the first bit of praise she had won from her grandmother in two weeks, Tony’s heart was light as a feather as she danced off to her own room to

write "Daddy" her weekly letter and tell him she had made a "really truly cake" all by herself.

"My, but I'm glad now I can report 'fair and warmer,' " she chuckled. "Oh dear, what if I had let my temper go yesterday! Wouldn't it have been just awful? I should have had to tell Daddy, I suppose, and I'd have been so ashamed. And now I can tell him about the cake instead, which will make more palatial—no—I mean palatable reading. Bless Uncle Phil! I'll give him a good word, too."

And Antoinette's pen fairly flew over the paper. There were always a thousand things to say to "Daddy."

CHAPTER VI

BEFORE THE FOURTH

IN the meantime, the boys, having finished their rowing lesson under Phil's tutelage, were drifting along lazily, keeping close to the shore to enjoy the cool shadows.

"I say, are you fellows coming out to-night?" asked Phil.

"Are you?" challenged Ted.

Phil stooped and let the water ripple through his fingers.

"Yes," he answered after a moment's pause.

"Then we are in it, too. Aren't we, Larry?"

"I'm not," said Larry coolly.

"Shucks! Don't be a Miss Nancy."

"Don't know the lady, but I do know we'd be precious idiots to get into a scrape now, when we promised Dad we'd behave ourselves."

“Who’s not behaving? Uncle Phil hasn’t said we couldn’t go.”

“Have you asked him?”

“Well, no. We don’t have to ask him every time we turn around, do we? He doesn’t expect us to be sissies any more than Dad does.”

Larry said nothing. Having said his say he never argued.

“It isn’t anything but a lark, is it, Phil?”

“No,” said Phil abstractedly, bent on trying to pacify his own conscience. There was no doubt in his mind as to what his father would call the lark. “Rowdyism” was the word, and rowdyism happened to be one of Stuart Lambert’s pet aversions.

“You don’t dare,” Ted taunted Larry. “I wouldn’t be such a fraidy cat!”

Laurence’s face went white.

“Ted Holiday, you take that back!” Larry’s voice was very quiet—ominously quiet. Every word shot out like a barbed dart.

“Let’s see you make me,” jeered Ted from

the safe vantage ground of the other end of the boat.

“I will when we get to land.”

It occurred to Phil that he wouldn't care to be up against Larry Holiday angry and he didn't envy Ted that grim promise.

“Why wait?” blandly from the irrepressible Ted.

“Because I promised Uncle Phil to be careful in the boat.”

“Don't be such pepper pots,” advised Phil. “Row in, Larry, if you are going to, or let me. It's 'most dinner-time.”

Larry resigned the oars in silence and the journey was quickly accomplished. As they reached shore Ted made a dash for safety but Larry's long legs were too much for him, and he had not advanced a rod before his brother was upon him. In a twinkling the younger lad was down in the dust sprawling and kicking but pinned to earth by a relentless grip.

“Some jiu jitsu!” thought Phil, watching with considerable admiration.

“Take it back!” ordered Larry.

“W-won’t,” gasped Ted, breathless but game.

“Take it back!” repeated Larry and the vise-like grip pressed heavier.

“Right. I take it back. Don’t smash a fellow to bits. Ouch!” rubbing his arms ruefully as he sat up. “I was only fooling anyway. You needn’t have gotten so mad. Why didn’t you help, Phil?”

Phil laughed.

“Guess I thought you were getting what was coming to you. Three’s a crowd in a scrap anyway. Jerusalem, Larry! I’ll take pains to keep out of your way if you don’t happen to like the style of my conversation.”

Larry said nothing but strode on ahead up the Hill. He hated losing his temper, but that was not the chief reason for the gloom which bespread his face. Ted’s careless taunt had struck deeper than he had any idea. For Larry Holiday had made up his mind some time since that he was a coward. Long ago he had discovered that Ted and Tony reveled in hairbreadth exploits which made him sick to think of. More than once he had made

himself take foolhardy dares just to conceal from the others the galling fact that he was afraid. Not for worlds would he have had any one suspect the truth, least of all his gallant soldier father. He would keep the hideous secret so long as he could, but he had a morbid vision that sometime or other it would creep out and lie exposed to the scorn of the world. He had brooded over the notion so long that it had become a festering sore in his inner consciousness. Thus it happened that Ted, without the slightest intention of doing so, had accidentally struck the most sensitive spot in his brother's whole make up. Larry's anger had leaped white hot in furious self-defense. That kind of charge no one should make with impunity. It would be soon enough to hear it when the truth lay open for all to see.

Larry knew perfectly well, however, that it was not cowardice which kept him from falling in with the others' plans. That had been simply common sense and a straight-seeing sense of honor. He had long ago learned to reason out what Ted had yet to learn—

that they who dance inevitably pay the piper in the end. He was no saint, but the game in this case did not seem in the least worth the candle.

Tony met the boys at the gate with the threefold announcement that there was a long letter from "Daddy," that she had made "a gorgeous" cake and that Miss Ericson had invited them all to help her celebrate the Fourth in Mrs. Jewett's yard the following afternoon.

As the Lamberts sat at dinner a horn sounded somewhere across the lake.

"Dear me!" sighed Mrs. Lambert. "I had almost forgotten to-morrow was the Fourth."

"Better not," warned Charley, "or you'll get some awful shocks coming to you. We have a perfectly lovely lot of concentrated noise. And it's Independence Day, which means that we do exactly as we please from morn till dewy eve, and very early morn at that, too."

"That is precisely what it does not mean on these premises. If anybody blows a horn

or fires a cracker before six o'clock he or she forfeits the rest of the concentrated noise for the day."

"What a heartless threat, Daddy Lambert!" sighed Clare. "When we all love noise so, too. I think Fourth of July is heavenly."

"Guess Mother thinks it is more like the other place," chuckled Phil.

"I wonder if there will be much disturbance this year." Mrs. Lambert glanced across at her husband.

"The usual amount of harmless fun, I suppose; but the kind of thing which is a menace to property and safety and order I hope we discouraged sufficiently last year. We shall not hesitate to make arrests if necessary."

"How would you like to be put in the cooler, Phil?" The careless question brought a flush to Phil's face, and Clare, seeing this, changed the subject hastily.

"You don't suppose Phil really would dare go with the crowd after all Father has said, do you?" she demanded of her twin later.

"Don't know. I thought he looked mighty

guilty. My goodness, wouldn't it be awful if Father had to arrest him?"

"Oh, Phil wouldn't do anything really bad. He only wants to go because—well, just because he can't," Clare finished philosophically.

The night before the Fourth of July in New England villages used to be very much what Hallowe'en is in other sections of the country, an occasion when lawlessness became legitimate and when he suffered least who could best take a joke at the hands of the revelers. Woe to him to whom the youthful rabble owed any old grudge, for payment was likely to be delivered in full account. As a rule, little serious damage was done, but a spirit of license prevailed which was a distinctly destructive force in the community according to the views of Mr. Lambert and other public-minded citizens.

It was with a full knowledge that he was running the risk of incurring his father's serious displeasure, therefore, that Phil slipped unostentatiously out of the house, instead of going up-stairs to bed that evening,

and escaped down the Hill, where Ted was already awaiting him in the shadow of the boat-house.

“Game?” asked Phil.

“Sure!” Not for anything would Ted have admitted to any qualms. Phil was two years older and his pacemaker in most respects. It was characteristic that he found Phil’s recklessness more worthy of emulation than Larry’s cool judgment. Yet it must be confessed neither of the boys felt quite the glow of enthusiasm he had anticipated would accompany the adventure, and their pace to the village was not a very zealous one though neither would have suggested a return up the Hill.

When they joined the crowd, however, their spirits rose, buoyed up by the excitement of the occasion, and catching the thrill of mob sentiment they were both soon inspired with the carnival mood of the evening and ready to participate in any “deviltry.”

Inanimate objects performed strange feats that night. Farmer Lewis’ mowing machine found itself attached to a peculiar and very

steady steed, namely his wife's clotheshorse. Deacon Joy's scarecrow hung, a victim of lynch law, on the rival deacon's cherry-tree. Gates were removed from their hinges and deposited in strange places. Picket fences were impaled with half-ripened melons and squashes. It looked, indeed, as if the Brownies were abroad, only no kindly miracles were performed.

John Hope's prize calves, with red, white and blue ribbons about their necks, were tethered to Miss Mary Green's fence where they blarted piteously all night. A particularly clever arrangement this was regarded, too, as John was purported to be courting Miss Mary after his very backward fashion. Old Jim, the junkman's visible-ribbed gray steed, was turned loose to browse in Tom Mecklin's clover patch. This, too, was subtle as Tom was notoriously the "meanest man in the village." These little matters successfully attended to, the crowd decided as it was after eleven it was high time the bells began to announce the approach of the glorious Fourth and consequently scurried pell mell to the

“common” where the two churches stood.

They attacked Dr. Holiday’s church first.

“Locked tighter than a drum,” announced the vanguard. “How we going to get in?”

“Lift one of the kids up to the window, where the lock’s broken. Hi there, you little chap! You’ll do.” And Jerry David’s big brown hand descended on the wriggling and disconcerted Ted.

“I don’t want to,” protested Ted.

“Who in time is asking what you want? Up with you. Here, somebody put him up on my shoulder. There now, push like the mighty.”

Ted, considerably startled by his sudden elevation and thoroughly horrified at being made to break into his grandfather’s church, did not dare disobey and pushed “like the mighty.”

“Go to it, Kid. Another boost and you’ll do it,” encouraged some one.

Another boost and Ted certainly did it. The window yielded, and through its sudden opening the boy pitched headfirst with a flurry of heels which suggested a frog taking

a leap into a pool. At the same time somebody hissed "Constable," and the crowd, selfish and heedless in its fright as well as in its amusement, scattered in all directions, leaving poor Ted shut in the church and Phil Lambert alone outside, dismayed, frightened, but loyally rooted to the spot. Whatever happened he would not desert his comrade. That fact alone was fixed in a reeling universe.

CHAPTER VII

THE END OF THE CELEBRATION

“So I’ve gotcher, my fine chap.” The hand of Barney Drury, the big chief constable, came down on Phil’s shoulder with a grip that might have been Beowulf’s so mighty was it. “Well, blow my gizzard! If ’tain’t Phil Lambert! Father know yerout?”

Phil shook his head.

The big constable permitted a malicious grin to relax the sternness of his official expression though the grip on Phil’s shoulder did not loosen correspondingly.

“Reckoned not,” he chuckled. “Whatcher doin’ here, anyhow? Breakin’ inter the church?”

“We—I—we all were. The others ran.”

The grin widened.

“Reckon they did. I thought a young army’d got loose. Why didn’t you run, too?”

“I didn’t—didn’t want to,” stammered Phil, not being minded to betray Ted if he could help it, though he was at his wit’s end wondering if the other had been badly hurt by his fall from the window.

“Likely yarn,” sniffed his captor. “Out with the truth, young man, or I’ll hand ye over to your father, double quick. Were you up to more tricks?”

“No, sir. Somebody is in the church and I didn’t want to leave him because maybe he’s hurt. He fell in.”

“Fell inter the church! Well, by Heck!” The speaker gazed upward and again relieved his feelings by a throaty chuckle. “ ’Pears like the person’s eenamost ready ter fall out agin,” he averred.

Phil, too, looked up hastily at this and was relieved to see Ted’s face looming up in the window.

“I’m not hurt. But I had to pile up things a bit to get up here again,” the younger lad was observing tranquilly. “Please catch me, Mister Man. I’m coming down.”

“Mister Man’s” jaw dropped.

“Ye be, be ye? Blow my gizzard, but you’re a cool one! How do I know tother won’t skip on me while I’m a catchin’ you?”

“Guess if I’d been going to skip I’d have done it before now,” said Phil somewhat indignantly. “Let me go, Mr. Drury. I won’t run.”

The constable grunted and released his grasp.

“Right. Reckon I kin trust Stuart Lambert’s son to keep his word. Now then, Sonny, drop.”

Whereupon was enacted the rather unusual scene of a representative of the law rescuing a breaker of the peace from durance.

“Now then, ye young varmints,” he continued when Ted was on “terra firma” once more, “tell the judgment truth. How much harm have ye done this night?”

“None,” said Phil which was the literal truth. “We’ve been with the rest though and maybe that makes us just as bad,” he added honestly. “Ted didn’t want to go in the window. They made him.”

The constable brought down his heavy

brows and looked very fierce but there was a twinkle in his eyes.

“Accomplices, by Heck!” he pronounced judicially. “Who’s tother one?” pointing to Ted.

“Ted Holiday!”

“Parson’s grandson?”

“Yes.”

“H-m-m! Might be in better business than fallin’ inter meetin’ houses. Ye’re a couple er young scalawags who deserve a sound thrashin’ apiece, but since ye hain’t done any pertickler harm’s fur’s I kin see, I’ve a mind to let ye go Scot free. Blow me, if I hain’t!”

The boys said nothing but waited a little breathlessly for the decision.

“I’d orter hand *you* over to yer Dad,” he went on addressing Phil who bit his lip. That was what he had been afraid was coming.

“But seein’s I was young onct myself, I guess I’ll let ye both go this time, pervidin’ ye’ll make tracks fur home.”

The boys promised to accept his terms and, indeed, were only too glad to obey when he dismissed them with a final admonition to

“skidaddle.” Neither had any inclination for further adventure that night.

“Phil, you could have gotten away with the rest,” said Ted when they were out of hearing. “Why didn’t you?”

“What do you take me for? I wouldn’t have budged if the whole county police had been after me. After getting you into that hole I wasn’t very likely to leave you. Besides, I was scared to death for fear you were hurt.”

Ted felt gingerly of his head.

“I did get some whack on the corner of a pew. Dazed me for a minute, but I was all right in a jiffy. I had to go and get some chairs from the Sunday School room to climb on. That was what took me so long. My, but I was scared when I got back and heard voices! I thought sure you were being arrested. But he didn’t sound very fierce so I made my appearance.”

“Barney’s all right,” said Phil. “We were lucky to fall into his hands. Gee! I’m glad it wasn’t Dad.” And Phil mopped his forehead as if the thought of that possible

catastrophe were a little too much. "I say, Ted," he added after a moment, "I'm no end sorry I got you into this mess."

"Stuff! You didn't get me in. I came because I wanted to see what it was like. Found out, too. Jerusalem! I thought I'd come to the end of the world when I pitched in through the window. Whoopee! There's a light in Uncle Phil's office. S'pose he knows I'm not in?"

"Shouldn't wonder," gloomily from Phil. "There is probably glory in store for both of us, worse luck. I'm going to try my darndest to effect a private entrance though. Good luck to you. Hope you get in all right."

He crossed the street, went round behind the house, climbed the big maple tree and thence swinging on to the piazza roof entered his own room noiselessly through the window. This feat he had performed more than once for fun but never before had he done it in such grim earnest and with such a guiltily beating heart as to-night, and very thankful he was when he realized that it was safely accomplished, apparently without having

aroused a soul in the house. Ted, however, was less fortunate, for as he quietly let himself into the house with the latch key he had taken the pains to provide for himself, he walked straight into his uncle coming out of the office.

“Ted, where have you been?”

“Out,” said Ted rather obviously.

“Without permission?”

The boy nodded in silence.

“Have you been down in the village with the crowd?”

“Part of the time.”

“Did you enjoy yourself?”

“No-o.” Suddenly Ted looked up, tired of evasions, ready to face the music like the soldier’s son he was. “I had a rotten time, Uncle Phil. I ought not to have gone, and I’m sorry.” The words were somewhat jerkily ejected, but they rang true for all that.

“I am sorry, too,” returned his uncle gravely. “But it is too late to discuss the matter to-night. Good-night, my boy.”

And when Ted tumbled into bed a few min-

utes later it was with an aching head, an uncomfortable sense of judgment suspended, and, worse still, the knowledge that he had been the first to break his promise to his father. When he finally fell asleep it was to dream that his grandfather was preaching to a congregation of scarecrows sitting in church pews arranged zigzag like a Virginia rail fence on the town common.

There was no danger of any one's sleeping unduly late the next morning for a rather continuous fusillade of noise went up all over the village, from sunrise on. The Hill was, however, fairly quiet, thanks to Mr. Lambert's dire threat and the fact that the young Holidays were inordinate sleepy heads.

The unsightly and decidedly uncomfortable bump on Ted's forehead added to his discomfiture and prevented his concealing his last night's exploits even had it not been already too late to do so. Tony was troubled and sympathetic; Larry, coolly superior, declaring his misfortunes only served his young brother right. Mrs. Holiday, though her looks spoke volumes, had nothing to say

to her graceless grandson, for she was scrupulously loyal to her agreement with her sons that in the last analysis the children were in Philip's hands for discipline. It was a rather scared and meek Ted who obeyed a summons to his uncle's office after breakfast, and it was a still further chastened one who emerged later with a sentence of bed that night while the fireworks were in progress.

Phil, too, was in a subdued frame of mind. On the whole, it seemed to him he would have preferred to be in Ted's shoes as an acknowledged, even penalized culprit, but somehow he could not drive himself to confessing, though he was in hourly dread lest somebody betray him to his father. He felt woefully cheap at letting Ted suffer the consequences alone for an escapade for which he very well knew he was largely responsible. Thanks to this conflicting state of emotions, he did not derive the customary delight from the "concentrated noise" peculiar to the day, and found things surprisingly stale, flat, and unprofitable.

"I say, Ted," he said as the two boys

strolled off together, bound by the tie of their mutual guilt. "I can't stand the show to-night if you can't be there. Wish Dr. Phil had hit on something else."

"Anything else would be just as bad," philosophized Ted cheerfully. Being more or less accustomed to being in disgrace he was not unduly depressed by the condition. "Don't be an idiot, Phil. It wouldn't make me feel one bit better to know you were missing things, too."

"Maybe 'twould me," said Phil moodily. "Honest, I feel like an awful sneak."

"You needn't. If I hadn't been caught you wouldn't have told and there isn't any reason why you should as it is."

"Didn't Dr. Phil ask if I was with you?"

"No, he didn't. Uncle Phil's a peach. Guess he knew I wouldn't want to answer that question and so he didn't ask it."

"You were awfully decent not to tell, anyway," said Phil.

"Who was decent last night, I'd like to know? 'Course, I wouldn't tell. It wouldn't have helped me any with Uncle Phil, any-

way. Gee! But he made me feel like a markdown.” And Ted shrugged reminiscently. That rather “bad quarter of an hour” was still fresh in his memory. “Come on, let’s drown our sorrows in some noise.”

CHAPTER VIII

THE FOURTH

By afternoon the satisfaction to be derived from sheer noise had waned sufficiently so that the Hill youngsters were not sorry for the new form of entertainment offered by Miss Ericson's "party," though she disclaimed so formal a title for the gathering and preferred to call it a "neighboring." It was certainly a joyous function. The children had found Miss Ericson very friendly and ready to make overtures of thorough comradeship and were nothing loath to accept her advances. "Miss Marjorie," as they had permission to call her, was what Ted termed a "corker" and Tony termed a "darling," which words seemed to be respectively the masculine and feminine equivalents suitable to the facts of the case.

To-day they had a thoroughly good time as her guests, playing games, doing "stunts,"

listening to the Victor for which she had sent to Boston, and in general making themselves perfectly at home. Finally, they came to doing some folk dances, an art of which Miss Marjorie knew something and of which Tony was past mistress. The latter was in her chosen element instructing the others in this form of amusement and every one forgot it was hot in the fascination of this brand new diversion.

“I never saw anything like the child,” said Miss Ericson, apropos of Tony, to Mrs. Lambert who, with her ever-present mending-basket, had come to the “neighboring.” “She is like flame and thistledown. Did you ever see anything like her grace and abandon?”

“Her mother was an opera singer and dancer. I never saw her, but they say she was very beautiful and very gifted. Ned Holiday simply went wild over her, much to his mother’s horror. They married, and she left the stage, and every one says she was a most devoted mother. She died when Ted was born.”

“Ah, poor woman! Think of having to leave three children like that, especially that adorable little daughter! How she would love to see the child now.”

For Tony was doing a solo dance, swaying and pirouetting, with her graceful childish arms extended and her eyes shining as if she saw wondrous fairy things. The others stood about surprised and admiring, for this was a new Tony to the Hill, though her brothers were used to what Ted called her “capers.”

“Hurray!” cried Charley enthusiastically as Tony paused a moment. “You’re a regular barefooter! Do some more! It’s great!”

Tony smiled and kicked off her slippers and began to dance stocking-footed in the grass. She danced on and on, half conscious only of the onlookers, fulfilling some rhythmic impulse of her ardent young soul, a fantasy which she herself perhaps scarcely understood but the emotional reaction of which she felt vividly. Suddenly a new guest arrived on the scene, and seeing her uncle, Tony

paused a little shyly and then ran to him, still in slipperless condition. The light went out of her face as she saw that he looked somewhat grave.

“Uncle Phil, don’t you like to have me dance?” she begged softly.

“I don’t exactly know whether I do or don’t, Titania. You dance like a fairy, child, and it is a joy to see you. But, I rather fancy, I prefer you to be shod for prosaic hygienic reasons, if for no other. And Tony, be prepared for the fact that Granny would *not* like it.”

Tony frowned rebelliously.

“Uncle Phil, there are precisely one hundred and one things I love to do which she doesn’t like. I have to dance. Sometimes my feet simply won’t stay still.”

He smiled at that.

“When you feel the spell coming on, there’s the barn and the attic and a willing audience, at your royal service.” He bowed gallantly.

“Uncle Phil, you *are* such a dear,” sighed Tony much relieved. “Do you know for a

dreadful moment I thought you were going to scold?"

"Do you know for a dreadful moment I thought I was, too?" he retorted with a twinkle. "Ted," he called, "bring the lady her slippers. The performance is over. I scent lunch."

Ted obeyed, and while Tony sat down on the grass to rehabilitate her feet Dr. Phil went to pay greetings to the ladies.

"I've lost my heart to your niece," Miss Ericson announced with a smile and a nod in Tony's direction. And Jean, hovering near her idol, felt a sharp little pang of resentment and jealousy.

"Just because she's pretty and can do things like that, everybody admires her," she thought angrily. "I guess there is no danger of any one's losing their heart to me."

"Jean, can you help me?" called Mrs. Jewett from the porch where she was setting forth the feast, and Jean departed with her head high.

"Lucky, I'm good for something," she thought ungraciously.

“I fear altogether too many people are going to lose their hearts to Tony,” Dr. Phil was saying. “Is there any prescription for keeping them unspoiled, Mother Lambert?”

“Tony won’t spoil,” said Mrs. Lambert. “I’ve watched her, Phil. She will come out all right.”

“I believe she will,” he agreed, “but I’m glad to have your expert testimony.” And as Miss Ericson excused herself to go and help Mrs. Jewett he followed.

“Do you know you are a rather unusual person?” he said. “Is your idea of taking a complete rest, entertaining a crowd of obstreperous youngsters, keyed to the pitch of Fourth of July excitement on one of the hottest days we’ve had this summer? I’ll have to tell tales to Dr. Bill, down there in Boston.”

Dr. Bill was Dr. William R. Newcomb, a medical-school chum of Dr. Phil’s, through whom Miss Marjorie had come to the Hill. She and Dr. Phil had met before and were already good friends.

“Oh, I love children. They never tire me.

It is a real rest, at least a change to be with them. I always think I was meant to have been one of a large family, instead of being an unfortunate only child. As for Fourth of July—are folk dances and music and games not the best kind of holiday entertainment, preferable even to torpedoes and crackers?”

He laughed.

“So your party is in the nature of a safe and sane substitute? I don’t wonder you thought substitution desirable. It was a ‘bit thick’ as the Englishman says, this morning.”

“Oh, I survived the noise, but, seriously, I believe that communal celebration, pageants, music and the rest of it will soon supersede the old glorification of noise. You are very backward in Dunbury.”

“Granted. We’ll have to do better another year. There are a good many of us who would cheerfully do away with the kind of communal celebration we had last night.” He smiled a little, remembering Ted’s version of his adventures.



"HE SMILED DOWN AT HER."

“Exactly, and you can’t take away one form of pleasure without substituting another.”

“Right again. You seem to know a whole lot of things besides how to mix paints.” He smiled down at her, and it occurred to him that she was an extraordinarily pretty young person in her quaint short-waisted, ruffled blue gown, and wondered if Bill was content to keep her a mere patient.

“Hello, here is Captain Jean at the wheel as usual,” he added. “Here is a person who is always right on the spot when there is anything to be done,” he declared to Miss Ericson.

“So I have noticed,” agreed that young lady so heartily that Jean straightway lost sight of the little grudge she had been harboring.

And then there was a general summons to the guests to assemble, and soon sandwiches and deviled eggs and pickles and all sorts of other delicious food began to disappear at a truly remarkable rate.

“Oh dear! I wish every day was the

Fourth.” And Charley eyed her last spoonful of ice-cream regretfully as a symbol of the transitoriness of human delights.

“Heaven forbid!” laughed Dr. Phil, then, catching sight of Phil’s rather somber countenance, he added, “What are you so pensive over, O my namesake? Too much Fourth?”

Phil flushed and shot a sidelong glance at his mother. But she was talking to Mrs. Jewett and did not notice.

“Maybe,” he admitted guardedly.

For a moment his eyes met the doctor’s and then the boy’s fell. The moment was enlightening. Dr. Phil had asked his question lightly without malice aforethought, forgetting for the time being any suspicions he might earlier have entertained as to Phil Lambert’s possible share in his nephew’s night escapade. The miserable confession in the lad’s eyes now left no doubt as to the true state of affairs.

That evening another neighborhood gathering took place on the Holiday porch, in front of which Dr. Phil always undertook the execution of the Hill fireworks. Two only

of the Hill denizens were absent. Mr. Lambert had remained at home to finish some business correspondence, promising to appear later, and Ted lay upstairs in bed, with his head buried in his pillow trying to shut out the horribly fascinating whizz of the rockets.

Tony's tender heart ached for her banished brother and she could not dismiss him from her mind as inexorably as Larry could. But somebody else felt even more wretched over Ted's enforced absence. Phil was calling himself all kinds of names and wishing with all his heart he had pled guilty early in the day instead of waiting until now when it seemed so impossibly hard to make confession. He was "shirking" again, the worst kind of shirking, and he knew it. It was a distinct relief when Dr. Phil called him to help in setting up some of the fireworks. Anything was better than sitting still and thinking. But as he pattered over the task and his hands suddenly met the doctor's he felt that he couldn't stand the situation another moment.

“Dr. Phil,” he faltered in a low voice, “you know?”

“I can guess a few things, Philip.”

That grave “Philip” almost upset the boy. He admired the doctor tremendously and was overcome with shame, realizing what the other must think of him.

“Ted wouldn’t have gone, if I hadn’t. It was my fault.”

Dr. Phil said nothing, knowing there was more to come.

“I’m going home to have it out with Father,” added Phil.

Then the doctor’s sternness relaxed and his hand rested with a firm, encouraging, friendly pressure on the boy’s.

“Right, Phil. I didn’t think my namesake could really be a coward.”

“I’m afraid I am, sometimes, Dr. Phil. But I’m not going to be about this any more.” And, to the surprise of every one, Phil shot across the road and into the other house.

Nobody ever knew precisely what Stuart Lambert said to his son, but it was a very

sober and penitent Phil who crept into bed an hour later, yet withal a happier Phil than the boy who had been dragging the chains of a guilty secret all day.

CHAPTER IX

THE "SLOUGH OF DESPOND"

"JEAN, will you make a cake and see to the bread and help the twins get dinner? Miss Maria is having one of her bad days and wants me to come down and stay with her."

Jean frowned and her mouth drew into a set and rather unlovely line. This was her morning for a lesson with Miss Marjorie. She had hurried to get everything done so she could go right over and now everything was spoiled. It did seem as if she had the hardest time of anybody she ever heard of. It was just too bad.

"I don't believe Maria Davis is sick any more than I am," she said crossly, giving the sheet on the bed she was making an ill-tempered jerk. "I believe it's just an excuse to get you down there to do her work."

Mrs. Lambert turned from the mirror before which she had been fastening on her hat.

"Why, daughter, that is not a very kind speech."

"Well, maybe she is sick," admitted Jean grudgingly. "But it does seem as if she might ask somebody else to help her out once in a while. I suppose you have to go and I have to stay at home and I can't take a lesson with Miss Marjorie."

"Too bad, dear. I am very sorry. But Miss Ericson will understand, I am sure. Perhaps she can give you some time this afternoon. I will try to get back if I can."

A little ashamed of her peevishness but still aggrieved, Jean finished her bed-making in silence and then repaired to the Jewetts' with her ill news.

"Good morning, neighbor," greeted a cheerful voice from the kitchen, and, to her surprise, Jean beheld Miss Marjorie enveloped in a huge blue gingham apron, washing dishes as deftly as if that were her customary morning amusement. "Dearie me! What a lugubrious countenance! What's the matter?"

Unconsciously Jean's frown relaxed and

the corners of her mouth went up a few degrees.

“Why under the sun are you washing dishes?” she counter-questioned. Miss Marjorie was such a dainty person it seemed little short of sacrilege that she should be engaged in such a sordid pursuit.

“One of Marthy’s children has the croup and I sent Mrs. Jewett down to cure her. I am doing the family housework, if you please. I am even empowered to get Sam’s lunch, though whether he will dare to come into the house and eat it is another question,” smiled Miss Marjorie reminiscently. Sam was Mrs. Jewett’s only son, a huge hulk of a man but as shy as a child. “I feel dreadfully swollen with importance. Do you mind if we postpone the lesson until this afternoon? I have to concentrate my mind on Sam’s luncheon.”

“I was just going to tell you I couldn’t come. Miss Maria Davis is sick, too, and Mother had to go down there and leave me to see to the baking.”

“Baking!” groaned Miss Marjorie. “I begin to unswell. Mrs. Jewett didn’t em-

power *me* to bake but only to set out a cold lunch. There, there's the last dish," and, wiping her hands, she came over and laid her slim fingers on the girl's forehead. "Jeanie, dear, it's ironing day," she said softly.

Jean flushed and looked in some dismay at her friend.

"Did I really look so dreadfully cross?" she queried.

"Cloudy to cloudy as the weather bulletins say. There, that is better. Now run along, little girl. I'll come over later and watch you bake, if I may."

"You may, but it will be dreadfully hot in the kitchen," warned Jean.

"Bread's 'riz.' Ought to go into the oven this minute," announced Charley as her sister came in.

"We've done the dishes and swept the porch and dusted the living-room, and if there is anything else to do speak quick or ever after hold your peace," proclaimed Clare. "We're going swimming."

"Oh, I don't care what you do as long as

you keep out of my way," said Jean sharply, already bent over the "riz" bread. "Your chatter is enough to drive anybody wild."

Suddenly she caught a glimpse of herself in the little mirror and instinctively put up her hand to smooth the pucker as Miss Marjorie had done. How horrid she did look, and that was the way Miss Marjorie had seen her. Oh dear! She went to her baking with a will, for she really liked cooking in spite of her grumbling, and couldn't help feeling very proud of the smooth brown loaves of bread, the delicious-looking cake and the dainty Italian cream which she had to show for her labors later when Miss Marjorie joined her.

"My, oh, my! How wonderful! Talk about being an artist! You are one already, Jeanie—Jane Lambert."

And Jean smiled happily, well pleased with the praise.

"Can't you come out on the porch and cool off a minute?" continued her friend.

But Jean, glancing at the clock, shook her head. It was high time for dinner prepara-

tions to begin and the twins were nowhere in sight.

"Can't I help? Here, let me do these. I know enough for that at least," and Miss Ericson took the bowl of peas from Jean's hand.

"Come out on the porch and I'll help," offered Phil, appearing on the scene at the moment. Miss Marjorie accepted the invitation and departed, leaving Jean to attend to the non-movable part of the feast. Poor Jean! She was hot and tired and angry with the twins for not being here to help, and, most of all, she was jealous. She hated to share Miss Marjorie with any one, and the gay laughter which issued from the pea-shell-ers out on the porch was not calculated to soothe her ruffled feelings.

"Good-by, child. I must run home to dear Sam or he will think he isn't going to get even a cold luncheon. Why, Jean!"

For, taken unaware by Miss Marjorie's sudden entrance, Jean had permitted two big tears to roll down her hot face.

"My dear! You are all tired out. In-

stead of taking a lesson, you shall come over and lie in my orchard hammock this afternoon while I amuse you.”

Jean brushed away the tears with the corner of her apron.

“Thank you, but if Mother doesn’t get back I’ll have to be here to see to things.” There was a little stiffness in her voice due to the effort she was making to drive back the tears which, once started, seemed bent on causing a flood.

“Poor little Cinderella! Never mind. Your fairy godmother may be just around the corner. Look out for the pumpkin coach.” And the speaker stooped to drop a light kiss on the girl’s forehead.

For a moment happiness conquered weariness and temper, and all would have been well had not Jean, happening to glance out of the window, a moment later, seen Miss Marjorie and Phil, down by the lilac bush, their heads very close together, indulging in what was evidently a very absorbing conversation. She turned back to her tasks, but the little green demon was having his malicious

way with her. At dinner she was too tired and dispirited to eat, and the last straw came, when, as they rose from the table, Phil announced that he and Miss Marjorie had a "bully secret."

"You can have your old secret," she blazed out hotly. "I'm sick to death of everybody and everything and I wish I were dead." And, like a whirlwind, Jean flew up-stairs and locked herself in her own room.

"Now, see what you've done!" Clare reproached Phil.

"Now, see what *you* have done rather. Jean had to get every speck of the dinner except the little Miss Marjorie and I did, which was mighty little."

"That's so," said Charley. "We're pigs, Clare. Anyway, we'll do all the rest of the work that's done in this house to-day and let her rest. What is your secret, Phil?" she paused in the collection of dishes to ask.

"Can't tell yet, but it's a good one all right. Miss Marjorie's a peach from Peachville."

In her own room, Jean first indulged in the luxury of a thorough "weep" and then fell

asleep, utterly exhausted, physically and otherwise. When she awoke it was nearly five o'clock and she rose hastily to bathe and dress. The sleep had done her much good and she was ready to view the world more normally, but try as she would she could not quite banish the little green demon. It did seem queer that Miss Marjorie should share a secret with Phil and say nothing to herself about it. She couldn't help feeling a little sore and hurt still on that subject.

When she went down-stairs she could hear Charley singing "Tipperary" at the top of her lungs in the kitchen. In the dining-room the cheerful clatter of dishes told that Clare was setting the table. From the porch came Phil's voice declaiming, "No, no, by the hair of my chinny-chin-chin!" for Eleanor's delectation. Evidently the whole family was on its good behavior.

"'Lo, Jean," called Phil as she passed the hall door. "Come out and enjoy yourself. Twins are getting supper."

Jean accepted the invitation, willing to meet her brother half way in his advances.

"Have a nap?" he asked, making a boyish effort to be casual.

"Yes, I slept all the afternoon. Phil, I needn't have been so cross with you. I was awfully tired, and I guess it was a kind of heaped up pile of things that made me burst out that way. I'm sorry."

"That's all right. I didn't mind. Guess we have been a set of pigs, as Charley says."

"Oh no," she protested. "It isn't that, Phil. It's—" But how could she explain it was mostly a silly freak of jealousy of which she knew she ought to be heartily ashamed?

"I guess it was a whole lot of things," he finished for her. "You'll feel better when—" But here he clapped his hand over his mouth. "There's Mother," he added hastily, and bounded down the steps, across the grass, to meet the new arrival.

"I say, Mums, did Miss Ericson telephone you?" he asked, linking his arm in hers.

"Yes."

"And you are willing?"

"Yes, indeed. More than willing."

“Hurray! I’m so glad. Ye’ll be after likin’ your new Bridget so well ye’ll be wantin’ to kape her furiver,” he chuckled.

“I rather think I shall,” she smiled back.

CHAPTER X

THE WAY TO FAIRYLAND

As they rose from the supper table that night, Phil astonished his sister by saying casually, "Come on out for a paddle, Jean. There's a great old moon."

She had so often refused to do things with the others that they had almost ceased to invite her to join them in their pastimes and pursuits. More and more she had crept into the shell of her reserve, living her own life and dreaming her own dreams to herself. Yet with the unreasonableness of human nature, she had been often hurt by the very exclusion which she had herself created. Accordingly, to-night Phil's cordial invitation, complete surprise as it was, almost sent the tears welling up in her eyes again.

"Miss Marjorie's going too," he added, almost as if he felt the need of bribing her acceptance.

“Oh!” she exclaimed quickly. “Of course I’d love to go,” and wished she could find a way of making him understand she would have been glad to go anyway, even without Miss Ericson.

Certainly there seemed little left to desire, when, later, they drifted down the moonlit lake, Phil at the paddle and the two girls luxuriously nestled among the cushions. All the weariness and hurt and jealousy of the day were swept away and Jean gave herself utterly to the enjoyment of the beauty of the night and the congenial society. She did not care even to talk and let Phil and Miss Marjorie preempt most of the conversation. It was enough just to *be*, for the time.

And when Miss Marjorie kissed her good-night and whispered, “Don’t forget to watch out for the pumpkin coach,” Jean smiled back and said she thought she had been in it that evening.

When she awoke the next morning she couldn’t help feeling as if something delightful were about to happen and went about her

tasks with a little smile on her lips and an unusual lightness of step, corresponding to the lightness of her heart.

“Miss Marjorie wants you to go driving with her this afternoon,” announced Phil from the telephone. “She’ll be here at half-past two.”

And after dinner, when Jean ran up-stairs to get ready for the drive, she felt like a very different person from the tired, miserable, little shrew of twenty-four hours earlier.

“Better wear your suit,” advised her mother, and, nothing loath, Jean went to get out the pretty blue suit in which she knew she looked her best.

Altogether the mirror vision was not nearly so unsatisfactory as usual this time, when the girl took a last peep before going down-stairs. The trim suit, with the wide, white lawn collar of her shirtwaist softening its lines about her slim throat, the little blue hat with the bobbing cherries, which just suited the small oval face, and, more than all, the excited color in her cheeks and the happiness which shone in her gray eyes made Jean

very good to look at even to her own critical gaze.

As she came down-stairs she was surprised at seeing Phil stow away a suitcase in the back of Sam Jewett's "democrat" and found the whole family assembled on the porch as if the occasion were more significant than an ordinary afternoon drive.

"Behold the pumpkin coach," laughed Miss Marjorie, pointing to the "democrat." "Did you know you were going to be kidnapped, Princess?"

Jean gasped and turned to her mother for enlightenment.

"Miss Marjorie is going to borrow you for a week, Jean. We shall miss you dreadfully, but we are all delighted that you are going to have a real holiday."

"But can you spare me?" faltered Jean.

Mrs. Lambert smiled.

"I have engaged a new maid," she explained.

"Bridget O'Flynn, at your service, M'm," said Phil gayly. "Stiddy as a clock and warranted to go eight days without stopping."

And then the good-bys were said and Phil helped the two girls into the carriage and they departed for the station. Jean's last qualm was dispelled when she found her father was there to see her off.

"Good-by, little girl, have a good time and don't forget us," he said. "Here's a little extra spending money," and he tucked a bill in her hand.

Just then Dr. Phil also appeared on the scene, armed with magazines and a box of candy, which he presented to the travelers. A few minutes later the train snorted in, and Jean, still in a daze, was rushed into the Pullman and deposited in a big chair. Before she quite realized what was happening to her they were leaving the station and her last glimpse of home was the wave of Phil's cap. She leaned back in the chair and for a moment gave herself up to its novel luxury and then, inevitably, came the query, "Where are we going?"

"Fairyland, of course," smiled Miss Marjorie.

"Oh-h! Miss Marjorie, why ever in the

world are you so good to me? Was this Phil's secret?" Jean added suddenly as the inspiration came.

"Of course it was. We planned it all yesterday and got your mother's consent. They packed your bag last night, while we were out canoeing. The twins nearly burst this morning trying not to tell. Phil offered, of his own accord, to help with the work so there would be nothing to spoil the full enjoyment of your holiday."

Jean drew a long breath.

"And he just hates doing housework, too! Isn't that good of him? Oh, dear! And I was so cross with him yesterday just when he was planning to do all that for me. Why, Miss Marjorie, you don't know how horrid and—jealous—I may as well say it—I was, because I hated to have him have a secret with you."

"Was that it? I didn't suspect."

"I'm glad you didn't. I'm awfully ashamed now, 'specially since it was all for me. Oh, Miss Marjorie!" And Jean raised a flushed, penitent face.

“Oh, Jeanie—Jane! Now, you have that off your mind, just forget everything except that we are going to Fairyland.”

“All right,” and Jean snuggled down contentedly. “I don’t see how I could be happier than I am this blessed minute. I don’t care where we are going. I’m just meaning to enjoy every minute as it comes along.”

Several hours later they disembarked at the great station in Boston and surrendered their bags to a tall, gray uniformed, red-capped personage who impressed Jean greatly by his air of importance. She hardly got her breath before they were being rushed across the city in a taxi-cab, another new experience. Her godmother was evidently of the most expert twentieth century variety. They were soon comfortably located in a quiet hotel, just off Copley Square, and later sat down to dinner in the great cool dining-room where soft music was being played and negro waiters plied noiselessly to and fro among the tables.

“I’m a country mouse,” laughed Jean.

“Do you know I never stayed all night in a hotel in my whole life?”

“How do you like it?”

Jean looked meditatively about the room and at the assembled guests.

“It is lovely,” she said, “and the people all look so nice and prosperous and calm and as if they never could, by any chance, fail to use the right fork. It is great fun to see it, but I’d hate living in a place like this. Why do you suppose people ever do it? I think a home is ever so much nicer, don’t you?”

“I certainly do,” agreed her hostess emphatically. “You are a very lucky princess to have a home like yours.”

Jean’s eyes grew a little sober. All at once that dear, shabby home seemed horribly far away. Just for a moment she would have given all the world to be back in it with Mother and the others. Then the orchestra began to play again, and the waiter brought a wonderful grapefruit salad, and Jean pulled herself together. It would never, never do to get homesick when Miss Marjorie was doing such lovely things for her.

After that there was no time to think of being homesick. They went to the theater that evening and in the morning walked in the Public Garden and made a tour of the library, where Jean had a beatific time admiring the pictures, especially the Abbey mural paintings of the Grail, for she adored the Arthurian legends and knew Malory and Tennyson's Idylls nearly by heart. All too soon Miss Marjorie dragged her back to the hotel where she was bidden to take a rest before luncheon and had to crawl up on her bed and watch her friend repack their bags.

The next move was even more delightful. As soon as luncheon was over there was another cab ride and in a surprisingly short time the princess and her fairy godmother were transferred to the Gloucester boat and were straightway sailing down the harbor to Jean's boundless delight, though she became more and more silent in proportion as her happiness increased. That was Jean's way and was quite well understood. Miss Marjorie understood most things it seemed.

Every island and lighthouse and bit of

shore was of interest to Jean. As for the sparkling blue water dancing up to meet the equally blue sky, the entrancing strips of yellow sands, the vivid bits of green, all of these made her artist eye fairly dizzy with rapture. Altogether it was a delightful sail and Jean could hardly bear to leave the boat three hours later at the Gloucester pier, but one sensation followed another so quickly that she scarcely had time to regret anything. In Gloucester they took a street car and rode out of the fascinating, fishy old town through Rockport and beyond to Pigeon Cove. All the way were wonderful bits of sea view and charming gardens gay with hollyhocks and verbenas and crimson ramblers.

Finally they left the car and walked up a path to a small brown cottage, with shady trees and bright little garden plots in front. Before Miss Ericson had time to knock, the door flew open and a tiny, plump, blue-eyed lady bobbed out under the vine-hung portico, for all the world like the figure in a Swiss clock Jean remembered having seen somewhere.

“Well, bless your heart, if it isn’t Miss Margie!” ejaculated the small person, leaning forward to print a smacking kiss on each of Miss Marjorie’s cheeks.

“Did you get my wire?”

“I certainly did. Beats all how fast good news travels these days. You needn’t have bothered though. You’re always as welcome as spring posies.”

And then Jean was introduced and also accorded a warm welcome by Mrs. Baxter, who informed the girl that she had known Miss Margie since she was knee high to a grasshopper and that it was a sight for sore eyes to see her any time. And then they were escorted up-stairs and their belongings placed in adjoining rooms. Jean was delighted to find that her window overlooked the sea, just now a heaving mass of sapphire. Surely this was Fairyland indeed! She was still standing by the window, fascinated by the beauty of its prospect, when Miss Marjorie knocked and entered.

“Well, Princess, how do you like it?”

“I just haven’t any words to tell,” sighed

Jean, turning from the window. "Miss Marjorie, I'm afraid I'll just fly away like thistle-down, I'm so happy."

"Hold on tight until you get some of Mrs. Baxter's biscuits and clam fritters into you for ballast," laughed Miss Marjorie. "Supper will be ready in ten minutes, and we must eat quickly so as not to miss the sunset."

CHAPTER XI

TONY DISCOVERS

THERE was a circus in the nearest town and Dr. Phil had taken the boys to it. Tony, also, was to have been included in the outing but some friends of Mrs. Holiday's, who were staying at the hotel, announced their intention of calling that afternoon, and, as the guests included a girl of Tony's age, it had been decreed that the latter must remain at home to entertain the visitor. Poor Tony! It did seem as if there was no end to the price exacted for trying to be a "gentlewoman." She didn't, in the least, mind staying in that morning to help her grandmother make cookies and iced tea, but she did resent giving up the circus on account of the invasion. It was "pretty near the end of the limit" as she confided to the twins who, with Phil, had been invited to join the circus party, under the doctor's chaperonage.

But there was no disputing Granny's ultimatums, and Tony had to watch the others drive away with as much fortitude as she could muster which, it must be confessed, was not a very large store. The Hill seemed horribly still stripped of its younger inhabitants, and she wandered about disconsolately seeking diversion while she waited the arrival of the guests. Presently she purloined a handful of lump sugar and fled to the barn to feed Tessy, the doctor's saddle horse, who was always keenly appreciative of such favors and seemed particularly glad to welcome company to-day in the absence of Gypsy and Jerry. She felt a little bit less lonely herself as Tessy burrowed her velvety nose in her benefactor's hand and Tony rested her head affectionately against the black mane in response. Suddenly, however, she lifted her head quickly. From somewhere in the barn came a queer sound—a sound resembling a human cough. To the best of her belief she was alone with Tessy, for even the men had gone to the circus, yet she was certain it was a human sound.

Breathlessly she waited, and after a moment it came again, muffled and strange but still decidedly human sounding. Somebody was in the barn—somebody who very obviously had no right to be there. Her heart began to beat a little unsteadily and with such a thump-thumping it seemed as if the person, if person there were, must hear it. Tessy, too, whinnied uneasily and turned her head inquiringly as much as to say, "What do you think about it?"

"Oh, dear!" thought Tony; "if only Uncle Phil were here. Maybe it's somebody waiting till night to set fire to the barn or steal something or maybe he's an escaped prisoner."

This last thought was sufficiently ominous to send her scampering out of the barn. The cheerful everydayness of things outside reassured her and made her feel she must have imagined the whole thing.

"I don't believe it was any one at all," she thought, half ashamed of her panic. "I believe I'll go back and give Tessy the rest of the sugar."

The barn was perfectly quiet this time save for the placid champing of Tessy's teeth on the manger and the sudden flurry of wings as old Whitey, the Plymouth Rock hen, flew down from the loft at the other end of the barn.

"Bet you've stolen a nest," said Tony. "You needn't act so important. I know I could find it easy enough if I tried. Guess I will, this minute."

And, following her impulse, Tony mounted the ladder which led to the loft, bent on discovering the nest. Suddenly, from almost under her feet, it seemed, came that queer noise again, unmistakably a human cough. She put her hand over her mouth to keep from screaming. Before her fascinated gaze the hay in the corner of the loft began to move, and to her horror she saw a head lift itself to view, followed by a pair of shoulders. Too frightened to move, Tony stood stock still and stared at the stowaway who didn't look very forbidding, however; just a very thin, very white, sick-looking boy about Larry's age. Even as she gazed he was

seized with another paroxysm of coughing, which shook his slight frame pitifully and brought an unwholesome purple hue into his ashy cheeks. Tony forgot fear in sympathy.

“Can’t I do something for you?” she begged. “Wait.” And without pausing for an answer she took two leaps across the mow and was down the ladder like a flash.

In a moment she was back with a tin drinking-cup filled with water from the barnyard pump.

“Here, drink this,” she ordered, kneeling beside the intruder.

He obeyed, draining the cup with a feverish gulp.

“Thank ye,” he muttered and leaned limply back in the hay. “If ye’ll lemme stay till after dark without tellin’ nobody I’ll go,” he bargained weakly. “I hain’t done nothin’—no harm—just restin’ a bit.” Every word seemed to come with an effort.

“But you are sick. You can’t go anywhere. Are you hungry?”

He grinned faintly.

“Oh, no, I ain’t hungry. Hain’t had

nothin' to eat since yesterday mornin'. But I ain't hungry, nor nothin'," ironically.

"Mercy!" cried Tony horrified. "I'll run and get you something this minute."

But he stopped her with a gesture.

"I ain't a beggar," he objected. "Besides, I don't want nobody to know I'm here."

"They won't. I can get something without a soul knowing," Tony confided eagerly. "Grandfather's taking a nap and Granny's dressing for the company. Mary Anne Eliza's gone to the circus and so has every one else. I can get into the pantry and out in a jiffy."

She was off again, and in a brief space of time was back, armed with a pail of doughnuts and cookies and apples.

"That was all I dared stop for," she explained. "I couldn't cut the cake for fear Granny would ask questions, but she won't miss these things."

He had already fallen greedily to the feast and it wasn't until the first edge was off his appetite that he looked up.

“Ye’re mighty kind,” he said huskily. “I—I’d sorter like to have you know I ain’t hidin’ ’cause I’ve done anythin’ to be shamed on. I ain’t hidin’ from nobody I hain’t a right to hide from,” he added darkly.

Tony plumped down on the hay beside him. She had utterly forgotten that she was supposed to be making her toilet in honor of the expected guests, forgotten, too, that she had ever been afraid of this other unbidden guest.

“Won’t you tell me about it?” she begged eagerly.

He shot a sharp, suspicious glance in her direction.

“If I do, will ye promise not to peach?” he exacted.

“Of course, I won’t tell anything you don’t want me to,” promised Tony. “Have you run away?”

He nodded.

“From the circus,” he admitted.

“The circus! Oh, my!” This was even more interesting than she had imagined, quite a story-book confession. “Why did you run away?” she pursued.

He frowned but rather as at some hateful memory than at her.

“I run away 'cause J— somebody cussed me out and licked me once too often. I've been kicked round and cussed and half starved till I was da—” He broke off, swallowed hard and began again. “Till I was sick of it. I made up my mind there was a chance to make a getaway while they was settin' up the tents and I lit out 'bout three o'clock yesterday mornin'. I didn't know what would become o' me, but I reckoned I didn't care much. Couldn't very well be wus off.”

“But haven't you anybody to care what becomes of you? No father or mother?”

“Not as I ever he'erd of. The chap that claimed to have the right to kick an' cuss me wan't my father—damn him! There, I didn't mean to say that,” seeing Tony's shocked eyes. “I choked it off before.”

“Never mind. Only please don't do it again. Do you mind telling me what your name is?” She changed the subject.

“Dick,” concisely.

“Dick what?”

“Dick nothin’. I never he’erd as how there was any more to it.”

“But everybody has two names,” objected Tony.

“Well, I hain’t. Supposin’ you give me yours?” he suggested jocosely.

But Tony took the remark quite seriously.

“All right. I have a middle name I never use. I’m Antoinette Carson Holiday. You can have the Carson if you like. Dick is short for Richard. I think Richard Carson sounds all right, don’t you?”

He grunted.

“Sounds all right. But what would your folks say to me takin’ your name? ’Course, I was just kiddin’. I couldn’t take your name. It’s too good for a d— a tramp like me,” he corrected hastily.

“I don’t see as anybody ought to mind. A name doesn’t matter much anyway. Only I think you might get on better with two, since it’s customary. I’m going to call you Richard Carson,” she concluded with characteristic conviction.

“Go ahead,” he grinned. “I sorter like the sound of it myself—the way you say it.”

Here he was seized with another attack of coughing and Tony flew to fill the pail with water. When she came back he was struggling weakly to his feet.

“Guess I’d better be movin’ on, ’fore your folks gets back from the circus,” he said.

“You aren’t able,” said Tony. “Sit down this instant. No, lie down. You look dreadfully sick. Now, listen to me. You stay right here and I don’t believe anybody will find you. If they do, just tell them that Tony said you could stay. Tony’s me,” she added by way of explanation.

“Oh, so Tony’s you?” He smiled a little and Tony decided she liked his eyes when he smiled.

“And when Uncle Phil gets home, I’ll tell him about you and he’ll know what to do.”

Dick stiffened.

“You promised not to peach,” he reminded.

“Uncle Phil is all right. He’s a doctor and everybody tells him their secrets and he

helps every one. Please, don't tell me I can't tell him, because I just have to tell him things, and besides, you're sick and you need to have him take care of you."

"Ye won't let him turn me over to J— to that man—the circus feller?" he persisted.

"No, indeed. I promise you that."

"All right. Do's ye like 'bout the rest, then," he assented.

And, having had her way, Tony sprang up.

"Now I must go or somebody will be looking for me," she explained. "I'll try to bring you some supper."

"Don't bother. Fact is, I gobbled them doughnuts so, I feel sorter queer." He shrugged a little. "Just ye leave me be. I'm all right, and thank ye right kindly, Miss, for all ye've done."

Tony lingered a moment.

"Promise me you won't try to go," she bargained in her turn.

"Promise," nodded Richard Carson. "Gosh! Somebody's comin'." As the honk of an automobile sounded in the driveway.

“Whew! I *must* skip,” and Tony beat a hasty exit. “I’m not dressed and Granny will be awfully provoked but I don’t care,” she thought recklessly as she entered the house via the shed and escaped up the back stairs to her own room.

CHAPTER XII

DICK

How Tony managed to get through the next two hours she never knew. Evelyn Harding, the small, affected, French-heeled, languid specimen of femininity whom she was expected to entertain, would have been obnoxious enough under any circumstances, and in the hostess' present preoccupation the case was almost hopeless. Underneath her spasmodic efforts at conversation Tony couldn't help wondering how the boy was getting along in the barn, if he were very sick, what would happen if anybody discovered him, what Uncle Phil would say, and a thousand other things beside. It didn't help matters any to know that her grandmother, already displeased by her failure to be on hand when the guests arrived, was regarding her with disapproving eyes, evidently quite conscious of her lapses as a hostess. No wonder Tony

went nearly distracted and thought the guests never would leave.

When at last they did go she took her grandmother's reproof very meekly—a meekness in fact which was largely due to inattention. When one's mind is as cram full of really important things as Tony's was even a lecture doesn't matter much, especially if you are moderately used to them. As soon as she could escape, she ran to the barn and again climbed to the hay loft. To her dismay, she heard a low, moaning sound, and as she reached the corner met a pair of wild, roving, unrecognizing eyes.

“Ye'll never git another chanct to lay finger on me, Jim Bates,” Dick muttered menacingly, and then there followed a terrible oath which made Tony shiver and step back. “Go 'way! Go 'way!” he begged. “Lemme 'lone. I hain't done nothin'.”

“Don't you know me? I'm Tony.”

But he only groaned and shut his eyes, and Tony realized that this was no time for secrecy or delay. To her immense relief, she heard the clatter of horses' hoofs and voices

and knew that Uncle Phil was back. She tumbled down the ladder with hazardous speed and in a moment she was pouring forth a jumble of excited words in her uncle's perplexed ears. When he grasped what it was all about he lost no time in following Tony's lead up the ladder and fifteen minutes later, Richard, surnamed Carson, was installed in a comfortable bed in an up-stairs chamber in the Holiday house with the doctor in attendance.

In the meantime every one down-stairs was hounding Tony for information, which she steadily refused to give until her uncle arrived. When he joined them, she managed to give a fairly connected version of her afternoon's adventure, begging that they would all help her keep her promise not to hand poor Dick back to the "horrid circus man."

"We will see that no harm comes to the poor lad. Indeed, he is in no condition to be handed over to anybody. He is very sick. No, Mother, it is nothing to be alarmed about. There is nothing contagious or even danger-

ous about his condition. He is worn out with fatigue, brutal treatment and mal-nutrition. Incidentally, he has a cold that would have developed into pneumonia with the slightest encouragement. Thanks to Tony, here, we'll pull him through and set him on his feet again."

"Oh, Uncle Phil, I'm so glad," and Tony threw herself into her uncle's arms. If Uncle Phil said it was all right, then it was all right, no matter what any one else thought.

"Philip, I think you are doing very wrong to praise Antoinette. She did a very foolhardy and dangerous thing, and I, for one, distinctly disapprove of her conduct."

"Hold on, Mother. Maybe Tony does deserve a bit of a scolding along with the praise, but not to-night. Her cup is about full for the present."

And Tony's eyes filled with grateful tears. Uncle Phil always knew precisely how one felt and when a little more would be just too much. "Now, then, Miss Culprit—Heroine, let's go and get some supper. We circus people are nearly starved, though I suppose the

rest of you who feasted on high tea and adventure are not in such a fatal condition.”

But Tony could not eat, and her uncle, seeing she was exhausted by her rather nerve-racking day, ordered her off to bed promising to bring her a “love-potion” if she were not asleep in half an hour. But he found her wide awake as ever when he peeped into the bedroom later, and proceeded to give her a dose of bromide which she swallowed meekly.

“Uncle Phil, you are awfully good to me,” she whispered. “I just couldn’t have stood to have Granny scold me again to-night. She’ll never understand, and you always do somehow. Is Dick better?”

“He is quieter but the delirium hasn’t entirely left him. He’ll be all right in the morning. Don’t worry your tender heart about him.”

“Oh, I’m so glad he is in your hands. I was so scared about him, he looked so wild. I like him, Uncle Phil. He uses queer English, and I am afraid he swears a good deal, though he tried not to to-day, but I do like him. He’s all right. I just know he is.”

“Take your word for it. Now go to sleep or I’ll give you a worse tasting dose.”

“Doesn’t seem as if I ever could. My brain’s all burning up. Now, please don’t tell me to count sheep. I get so fascinated watching ’em get over the wall, one after the other, that it makes me wider awake than ever.”

“Never mind the lambkins. Just lie still and make your mind a nice clean blank like a piece of paper and you’ll get to the Land o’ Nod by the first express.”

And so she did. But Dr. Phil watched all night by the sick boy’s side, and listening to his ravings discovered considerable information about his past life, information which made him sick at heart.

“Brutes like that Jim chap don’t deserve to live,” he thought. “We’ll have to give the lad a chance, if only to prove that there are a few decent human beings in his world.”

By morning the fever had abated and the delirium ceased. Dick woke in the early dawn, weak and puzzled, as he stared up in the doctor’s face.

“Where am I?” he asked feebly.

“With friends. Don’t worry, lad. Your first job is to get well. Shut your eyes and go to sleep again. Here’s a bit of ice.”

And with the grateful coolness in his mouth and a vaguely reassured feeling that everything was all right though strange, Dick obeyed. When he awoke the second time it was full day with the sunlight flooding the room. Little by little the reality of things came back. He remembered the weary journey over the dusty roads in deadly fear lest some one overtake and send him back to the troop and Jim, and with that ache in his chest getting sharper and sharper with every breath. All that day he had tramped, sick, exhausted, foodless, and at night had thrown himself to sleep in the grass on the shore of the lake. Toward morning he had wakened and crept up the Hill too sick to be afraid of capture. He had found the chance to slip into the big barn when no one was looking and had climbed into the loft where he had fallen into a heavy slumber. Here he had remained, waking in the early afternoon to

an intolerable thirst and with an acute pain in his lungs.

From this point his memory was confused, but he had a distinct if almost incredible impression of somebody with very big, bright eyes who brought him food and water and offered him a name because she thought he might get along better if he had two.

That was as far as his recollection went. How he got into the quiet, cool room and into the soft white bed he had no idea nor did he know who the tall man was who sat dozing in the big chair by the window. Yet he felt vaguely that the man was a friend. Indeed he seemed to have a feeling he had heard him say so in the gray dawn. The voice had been kind, not at all the kind of voice Jim Bates used when he spoke. He stirred a little uneasily and in a moment the doctor was alert and on his feet.

“How goes it this morning?” he asked. “Ready for breakfast? You look as if you were going to ask questions. Don’t. Save your energy for food, which will be on the spot shortly. You are better,” he added as

his practiced fingers tested the boy's pulse.

“May—ask—one—question?” Dick's voice came out in queer jerks as if it had forgotten how to manage itself.

“Just one,” permitted the doctor.

“Did—I—dream—girl?”

Dr. Phil laughed.

“What, Tony? Not much. She is real enough, as you will see in a few moments. I'll send her up with your breakfast.”

The boy settled down comfortably and closed his eyes as if he had no more curiosity on any subject.

CHAPTER XIII

THE SPELL OF FAIRYLAND

IT was the morning of the fifth day of Jean's sojourn in Fairyland. Miss Marjorie was sketching beneath a huge umbrella, but Jean lay absolutely idle and content, stretched at full length on the rocks, in the shadow of a boulder, watching the fishing schooners drift against the horizon and the great green waves roll in and dash in a shower of dazzling spray over the Giant's Shoe.

Presently Miss Marjorie looked up with a smile.

"What are you thinking about, Dormouse?" she asked.

"Nothing," Jean smiled back. "I guess I'm a lotus-eater. This is surely the land where it seems always afternoon. I'm awfully happy, Fairy Godmother. It has been a wonderful week."

“Hasn’t it? And you look all remade, Princess.”

“Do I?” wondered Jean. “I feel as if the change wasn’t only on the outside either. I feel remade all through, as if I loved everybody and wouldn’t mind going back to dishes and beds and all the rest of it, and as if I were never, never, going to be horrid and cross again, as long as I lived.”

Miss Marjorie laughed.

“The spell of Fairyland,” she said.

But Jean grew sober.

“Oh dear, do you suppose it is only that?” she queried. “Do you suppose I’ll be just as horrid as ever when I get back home? I just won’t, so there. When I feel like saying sharp, hateful things, I’m going to shut my eyes and see lovely sea pictures, and that will make me remember the spell.”

“Good idea,” approved Miss Marjorie. “Call it you have ‘suffered a sea change.’ ”

Jean sat up and resting her chin in the cup of her hand surveyed her friend.

“Miss Marjorie.”

“Yes, Jeanie.”

“Why did you like me at first? Or didn’t you like me but just thought I was so dreadful somebody ought to take me in hand?”

“Fairy godmothers have magic eyes. Of course I liked you, child. You let me look straight down into you that first day, and I saw all kinds of good and interesting things in there.”

“But when you heard me snap at the others and saw me scowl and fret when things didn’t go quite my way, didn’t you think you had been mistaken, that there wasn’t anything worth bothering about in me?”

“Quite the contrary. It only made me wonder what wicked witch had made a changeling out of the princess. Jeanie, dear, you were all tired out and what my old nurse used to call ‘hystericky.’ I knew the signs. I’d been there.”

“You!” incredulously.

“Even I, and not so long ago. That was why I took a vacation this summer. I found my voice was getting an ugly rasp to it when the cleaning woman didn’t dust the studio

to suit me and I scowled at a child in the Public Gardens when he bumped into me running after his ball. That was enough for me. I knew I had to have a holiday right away while I was still worth saving. A lot of our blues and woes are just physical, Jeanie—Jane. You'll find that out some day."

"Maybe that is partly true in my case," admitted Jean thoughtfully. "But that wasn't all the trouble," she added honestly.

"No, dear, it wasn't. I don't mean to keep you from seeing things perfectly straight. A good deal of it was your own fault, and you paid high for it and will pay for a long time to come."

Jean put both hands over her face to cool the scarlet flush. It was a different thing to accuse herself from what it was to accept censure from the person she admired most in the world. Suddenly she dropped her hands.

"Is that all, Miss Marjorie? Please, say it all, right out. It's hard to hear but I

guess I can stand it, and I'd rather you would tell me just what the trouble with me is, so I can begin to be different."

Miss Erickson laid down her palette and came over to where the girl sat.

"There isn't much the trouble, Jeanie, dear," she said. "It's only that you had gotten a bit out of tune so that you sounded a little jangly when anybody touched you. Wasn't that it, Jeanie—Jane?"

Jean nodded and put up a hand to wipe away a tear which would trickle down her nose.

"And now you're all nicely in tune again and it's up to you, as Phil would say, to keep in that desirable condition. Think you can do it, little Princess?"

"I don't know," said Jean soberly, "but I can try. It does seem as if I ought to stay in tune a long, long time after being so happy," she sighed.

There was a silence, during which Jean watched a gull dip and sweep against the clear blue of the sky. Presently she turned abruptly.

“Miss Marjorie, could we go home to-morrow?” she asked.

“To-morrow! Bless you, child, we have permission to stay until Monday. Don’t you want to?”

“I do and I don’t,” said Jean looking out to sea. “I love it here, and I’ve had such a good time, but it’s Mother’s birthday, Sunday, and I—well—I’d rather go home, if you don’t mind. I promise to stay in tune just as long as if I had had the extra two days.” She laughed a little tremulously as she turned to her friend.

“Very well, Princess. I shouldn’t wonder if you were right. We’ll take the morning train and stop over in Boston long enough to buy presents for everybody and then surprise them by presenting ourselves Saturday night.”

This program being literally fulfilled, a very brown, rosy and radiant Jean startled her family by appearing on the scene as they sat at supper the next evening.

“Why didn’t you stay until Monday?” demanded Charley when the greetings were

over. "Bet I wouldn't have come home till the last gun was fired."

"Guess I was homesick," laughed Jean happily. "Anyway I was Mother sick," and she smiled across the table at her mother with a light in her eyes which was eloquent of many things, things shy Jean would never find tongue to say. Perhaps Mrs. Lambert understood without words. At any rate, as she smiled back at her daughter Jean knew she would never regret the two days she might have had in Fairyland.

Such a lot of news as they all had to exchange! The family had to hear the minutest details of the traveler's experiences, how she went past the "Reef of Norman's Woe" of the "Wreck of the *Hesperus*" fame, how she went on board a really truly warship, how she climbed a lighthouse and made friends with the keeper's daughter, who was just her own age and had lived on an island all her life, how Captain Azariah, Mrs. Baxter's sailor husband, now retired, entertained them with strange adventures on land and sea, how the crabs nipped her toes when she was in

bathing, how they saw some whales spouting in the distance, how she and Miss Marjorie picnicked at Annisquam and met a lot of charming artist folk who all knew Miss Marjorie and praised Jean's sketch, how they sailed across to the Isle of Shoals and got becalmed on the homeward trip and had to spend hours out on the water until a breeze sprang up to take them home; all these things, and many more, Jean had to tell. Perhaps she had never talked so much in her quiet life. Certainly she never talked so fast and happily, and certainly, too, she had never been listened to with such respect and envy.

In return there was all kinds of home gossip to report, ending with the thrilling climax of Tony's finding the "circus boy" in the barn.

"We haven't seen him yet," said Charley. "But he isn't a myth, for Tony plays backgammon with him every day, and he tells the boys the most exciting yarns, almost equal to your Captain Azariah's. He's most well. Dr. Phil says he can come down-stairs next week. We are all crazy to see him. Guess

Granny Holiday isn't much pleased, but Dr. Phil always gets round her somehow, I've noticed."

And so Jean came back from Fairyland, rested and refreshed, and fully determined to keep in tune if it was humanly possible. It wasn't always easy. There were still bad days when things went sadly wrong and when the Fairy Princess snapped and sniffed quite as if the witch had gotten possession of her again. People do not make themselves all over in a week, and with the best of intentions it was uphill work. But with Miss Marjorie at hand to help, Jean did make progress, in spite of obstacles. Phil, too, seemed to understand magically, without being told, something of what was going on in his sister's mind and heart, and more than once he helped her over bad places with his whimsical good humor and open championage. Jean tried hard to meet him half way and not shut herself in so tight behind the wall of self, and in so trying found unexpected delight in new comradeship with her brother.

CHAPTER XIV

ENTERTAINING EVELYN

“CHILDREN, Evelyn Harding is coming to spend the day,” announced Mrs. Holiday, turning from the telephone.

“Who is Evelyn Harding?” asked Larry. Tony groaned.

“She is the everlasting limit, if you ask my opinion,” she volunteered. “She was here the day you were at the circus and I found Dick. A few hours of her was quite enough for me. You boys can entertain her this time.”

“Much obliged, but I propose to make myself scarce,” said Ted. “I’m going fishing with Phil. You’d better come, too, Larry.”

“You will all of you stay at home and entertain your guest,” observed Mrs. Holiday oracularly. “I expect you to make yourselves agreeable, too.”

“Can’t be did,” objected Ted, the irrepres-

sible. "You know I couldn't make myself agreeable if I tried. It's much safer to let me go fishing, Granny."

"You heard my wishes."

"But I don't want to stay at home and entertain a girl! Must I, Uncle Phil?"

"Hold on, Ted. One set of orders is enough. No shirking either. Cheer up, Son. There are worse things in the world than girls."

"I don't care," fumed Ted, which meant that he did care and was thoroughly out of temper. "Bet she'll be sorry I ever tried to entertain her," he prophesied darkly as his grandmother passed out of hearing.

Both boys fully agreed with Tony's verdict that Evelyn was the "everlasting limit." Their minds on that subject were made up from the moment the small guest descended from her mother's car. Resplendent in polka-dotted silk, high-heeled white shoes, beflowered hat and elaborate parasol, she was the living embodiment of what not to like in girls in the judgment of the young Holidays.

"What in time are we going to do with

that?” demanded Ted disgustedly of his brother. “I’ve a mind to cut, anyway.”

“You’ll do nothing of the sort,” said Larry sharply, having no wish to be deserted. “I guess I’m not going to stand this affliction by myself.”

Affliction it proved to be. There seemed absolutely nothing the guest cared to do. Tennis was too strenuous. She despised croquet. She couldn’t walk because her heels were too high, and she didn’t think she would enjoy rowing because she might get freckled. Finally Tony persuaded her that the lake was quite shady if they kept near shore and that, in any case, her parasol would be a protection. Phil and the twins were enlisted in the excursion and together they all descended the hill to the boathouse. Here Ted managed to maneuver things so that he was in the boat with the Lamberts, leaving Larry and Tony in charge of the guest.

“Gee! Look at her make eyes at Larry. Bet he feels sick,” he grinned wickedly.

“He looks bored to a frazzle,” giggled Clare. “Did you ever see such a goose in

your life? Aren't you glad we aren't like that, Phil?"

"I'd chuck you overboard if you were," said her brother with conviction. "Great Scott, what's the matter now?"

"Evelyn thinks the sun is too hot," called Tony. "We are going to land."

"And, when we land, a mosquito will disfigure her beauty or a frog give her a conniption," sniffed Ted. "Let's not go in," he added to Phil.

"Come on," ordered Larry from the other boat. There was a sharp edge to his tone, born of his morning of "affliction."

"Don't have to," was Ted's slangy retort.

"Yes, you do, too. Remember what Uncle Phil said."

Ted shrugged but yielded sulkily. He had learned that Uncle Phil expected to be obeyed when he gave orders, just as Dad did.

"Pull in, Phil. Reckon we've got to be martyrs to the cause," he groaned.

The other boat reached shore first and here a new complication arose. Evelyn declared she never, no never, could climb out of the

boat. She knew she would fall in the water.

“Oh, no, you won’t,” disputed Larry patiently. “Here, give me your hand. I’ll land you all right.”

But, unfortunately, he didn’t, and Tony, who had scrambled out of the boat and was already up the bank, turned in dismay as she heard a shriek and a splash and saw Evelyn up to her waist in the shallow water.

“Oh, I’m drowning! I’m drowning! Somebody get my parasol quick!” cried Evelyn, torn between two emotional interests.

“It floats,” quoted Charley dramatically, gazing fascinatedly after the rose pink treasure which stemmed the ripples gallantly like a new kind of boat.

Larry and Tony drew the frightened and hysterical Evelyn to shore and Phil rowed after the parasol.

“I’m awfully sorry,” apologized Larry in genuine distress. “I don’t see now how it happened unless the other boat hit ours. I thought it was perfectly steady.”

“It wasn’t st-steady at all,” wailed Evelyn. “It t-tipped awful. I felt it. And my

dress is sp-oiled and my shoes are all m-mud and my parasol's lost and I want to g-go home." And she sat down on the bank, a bedraggled and disconsolate bundle of woe.

"Don't cry," urged Tony. "We are all awfully sorry, and Phil's got your parasol." The other boat came along shore with Phil triumphantly brandishing his trophy. "We had better go home, though," she went on. "You can put on some dry clothes and see what can be done for yours. Maybe the dress isn't spoiled, and I'm sure the mud will come off your shoes."

This led to a new difficulty. Evelyn never wanted to get into a "h-horrid" boat again as long as she lived.

"But you don't want to walk home, do you? It is at least three miles through the woods."

Decidedly Evelyn didn't want to walk home, and presently allowed herself to be assisted back into the boat, a feat which with Phil and Larry's combined services was successfully accomplished. She was still, however, "weepy" and aggrieved and loudly be-

wailed the damage to her costume, especially to her beloved parasol.

“Anybody’d think we did the whole thing on purpose,” said Charley in a low tone as the second boatload started off.

Clare sent a funny little glance at Ted’s back as he bent over the oars, following Phil’s stroke. Then she began to talk “deaf and dumb” fashion with her fingers, an accomplishment the twins had learned and frequently found use for.

“My goodness!” gasped Charley when she understood the message. “Are you sure?” she whispered.

“Sure as sure,” Clare whispered back. “I saw him.”

Whereupon they both giggled delightedly.

“What are you two up to, back there?” Phil turned his head to inquire suspiciously.

“Not a thing. We’re as meek as two little angels twiddling their thumbs,” protested Charley. “Clare just told me a joke, that was all.”

This time it was Ted who turned, and, as he met the eyes of the twins, very solemnly winked, and the twins dimpled back in high glee and nefarious approval.

By the time they reached the landing Evelyn was nearly dry again, though she was far from presenting the elegant appearance of a few hours earlier. Mrs. Holiday was scandalized at such methods of "entertaining" a guest and scolded Larry pretty sharply for his carelessness. As a rule, he did not fall so easily as the others beneath the ban of her disapproval, but this occasion proved an exception and he got the full force of her righteous displeasure.

Evelyn was speedily transferred into some of Tony's clothing and thus clad looked more "like a human being," as Phil bluntly put it, than she had all day. In this new costume she managed, too, to pluck up a little power of enjoying herself and by the time her mother arrived to take her home she was really almost a normal little girl, and happily disposed to make light of the morning's misadventure.

Nevertheless, it was with considerable relief that the young people saw their guest ride away.

"I couldn't stand many such days," Ted burst out impulsively.

His uncle smiled.

"You showed your boredom rather too obviously for a model host, young man. I am afraid you are a shade too honest to be consistent with company manners."

Rather to his surprise Ted colored scarlet and made it a point to "vanish" immediately, like the Cheshire cat.

"Wonder what he has been up to now," pondered his uncle. "Some mischief, or I miss my guess. 'Ware Ted, indeed."

Later that evening he found Tony curled up in the hammock and looking very sober.

"Here's Miss Antoinette,

And I'd easily bet

She's got some new woe,

Or a grouchlet or so

But I don't know just what—no, not yet."

Thus he greeted her.

"Don't tease, Uncle Phil," she said as he

sat down beside her. "I've really got a puzzle. Why didn't Granny like my mother?"

He grew grave at that.

"How do you know she didn't?" he temporized.

"Don't hedge, Uncle Phil. I know. I've felt it lots of times. But to-day I heard her say something to Mrs. Harding that made me sure. Why shouldn't she like my mother? She was lovely and good and sweet and wonderful. Everybody says so. And Daddy worshiped her."

"I know, dear. I believe she was all that. I never saw her but once, and I was only a boy at that, but I didn't wonder at your father's worshiping her. But Granny was brought up in a narrow old belief that all stage people must necessarily be somehow depraved. Your father's marriage was a great shock to her. Try to understand how it must have grieved her with her prejudices and training and hereditary convictions. Your father has long since understood and forgiven any hardness she showed at the time of his marriage. He told me so the last time

I saw him, and admitted that she had something to forgive, too.”

“But she is just as hard now,” blazed Tony. “She doesn’t forgive. At least, I suppose she has forgiven Daddy, but she hasn’t forgiven my mother for—being herself.”

Her uncle was silent. He knew that Tony had hit the truth, and it was a little hard to find the right thing to say to this clear seeing young judge.

“Your mother and Granny belonged to two different worlds,” he said. “It will be for you to cross the bridge between.”

“I don’t want to cross, Uncle Phil. I want to stay—over with Mother.”

“Then you are being just as prejudiced in your way as Granny is in hers. Think that over, Tony.”

“I don’t want to,” repeated Tony stubbornly.

He laughed at that.

“You will, though. You are a fair-minded young person at heart, Antoinetta, and you are bound to build that bridge sooner or later.”

“I am going to boarding-school in the fall. Daddy said I might. And I won’t need to be—in Granny’s world,” she evaded. “Uncle Phil, I don’t mean to be horrid and ungrateful—truly I don’t. Granny is ever so good to me in her way. Only it always *is* in her way.”

“That is the way most of us like to be good to people,” he smiled. “Are you still liking your boy?” he changed the subject to ask.

“Yes, I am. Don’t you?”

“Yes, I think I do. He has a good deal to learn but he has the right stuff in him underneath. I have heard pretty much all his story now and I don’t see that any one has any claim on him, so there is no reason why he shouldn’t start over again under better auspices.”

“Oh, Uncle Phil, you’re such a dear! And there is the clock striking ten, and I know you are going to say ‘bed.’” She sat up in the hammock and leaning forward put both arms around her uncle. “You are next best to Daddy of anybody in the world,

and I'll think about the bridge," she promised.

In a moment she was gone and he sat smiling into the darkness.

"Confound Ned! What business has he to have a girl like that when I've neither chick nor child!" he muttered as he rose and went into the house.

CHAPTER XV

THE ROUND TABLE

“DEAR me, it’s just too hot to breathe,” declared Charley, throwing down her magazine disgustedly. “Don’t see how you can bear to work, Jean.”

Jean looked up from the sketch and shook her head.

“I was having such a good time I almost forgot it was hot,” she admitted.

“Hear, oh hear!” laughed Miss Marjorie, laying down her crocheting. “I’m afraid I am not such a triumphant demonstration of the supremacy of mind over matter.”

“Wish I’d been born in the Middle Ages!” Clare emerged from “Ivanhoe,” to contribute to the conversation.

“Why?” asked Miss Marjorie.

“Oh, I would have liked going to tournaments and seeing my knight carry my token to victory.”

“He’d more likely get it all mussed up with his precious gore,” put in Charley.

“I wish I were a knight,” remarked Ted, flat on his back on the grass, gazing skyward. “I love scrimmages and blobs of glory.”

“It takes more than scrimmages and blobs of glory to make a knight,” said Tony.

“What does make a knight? Everybody has just one answer,” challenged Miss Marjorie.

“Strength,” promptly from Ted.

“Courage,” more deliberately from Larry.

“Honor,” said Phil.

“Courtesy,” suggested Clare. “They were just as good to poor old women as to rich, beautiful ones.”

“A lady love.” This from Charley, who was romantic.

“Purity,” said Jean, who adored Galahad.

“I can’t think of anything else,” sighed Tony. “You’ve said it all. Anyway, doesn’t chivalry cover it?”

“Do you suppose any one person ever had all those qualities?” wondered Clare.

“ ‘Course not,” said Ted. “They were just story-book people, not real ones.”

“I don’t see why they couldn’t be real,” objected Tony. “I think they are, too. Uncle Phil is just as much a knight as anybody who ever went tilting round in tournaments and he does a whole lot more good, too,” loyally.

“I guess there are plenty of live knights to-day. Only we don’t recognize them, because they don’t wear armor,” meditated Clare.

“I saw one yesterday,” announced Miss Marjorie.

“Where? Who? What was he doing?” came the chorus.

“I was coming up from the village,” replied Miss Marjorie, “and I saw an old, lame woman just ahead with a heavy basket. The knight overtook her on his bicycle and instead of riding by, he got off, took the basket, fastened it on his wheel and carried it all the way home for the old woman. Moreover, he lifted his cap to her as politely as if she had been the finest lady

in the land instead of his mother's wash-woman."

"Who was it? Oh, Phil!" As Charley caught sight of her brother's rather abashed face. "That's just like him. He's always doing queer things."

"Like doing housework for me so I could run off to Fairyland," put in Jean quickly. "He served like Gareth among the pots and pans. Guess you are right, Miss Marjorie. The knights aren't all dead."

"Help!" groaned Phil. "'Tisn't fair to pick on a fellow. Lemme 'lone."

"Let's organize a Round Table," suggested Clare. "I think it would be lots of fun."

"We couldn't be knights," objected her twin.

"Well, we could be knightesses, anyway, couldn't we, Miss Marjorie?"

"Surely. It is a splendid idea, Clare. Let's do it."

"I don't want to be a knight," declared Ted, fighting shy of his own wish, now knight-hood bade fair to be made a modern institution, shorn, so far as he could see, of its

scrimmages and blobs of glory. "I'd have to be too everlasting good. I haven't a single knight-like quality, and I guess it's more comfortable to be without 'em."

Everybody laughed at this frankly unregenerate point of view but Charley shook her head at him.

"You'll be sorry if you don't join this order, Ted Holiday. We'll give tournaments and pageants and—oh, all sorts of things. Won't we, Clare?"

Already Charley's ready imagination was conjuring up wonderful visions.

"We can," said Clare. "But I didn't mean it just for a good time. I really think it would help us—other ways," she finished shyly.

"I hereby apply for membership," said Phil, unexpectedly rallying to his sister's standard. "I don't mind trying to be a knight, though I won't promise to succeed. I'm about as bad off as Ted," he admitted with a grimace.

"I didn't add my quality," said Miss Marjorie. "It was humility. Bravo, Sir Philip.

There's one knight for your order, Clare. Who else? Larry?"

Larry looked up and there was trouble in his eyes.

"I'm not—very—brave," he jerked out, and had no idea he was being inordinately brave at the moment. Miss Marjorie stooped and gathered a pink clover blossom. "I wonder," she mused, "if a boy who is brave enough to refuse to do a thing he knows is wrong, no matter how much he is coaxed and teased for not doing it, can fall very far short in courage."

Larry flushed. Ted wriggled uncomfortably. Phil looked sheepish. The Fourth of July escapade with all its details was still fairly fresh in everybody's mind.

"That is a different kind of courage," said Larry after a moment.

"A better kind. You are elected, Sir Laurence." And the clover blossom fell beside his hand.

"We all are, aren't we?" asked Tony. "We can be knights even if we are girls, can't we, Miss Marjorie?"

“Of course you can. Girls need to cultivate the knight-like qualities as much as boys do, sometimes more. We are all in it, aren’t we? Jean? Charley? Of course Clare is, because she started it.”

“We are all in,” said Jean. “I like the idea. It will help me keep in tune,” she added more softly, and Miss Marjorie smiled back, understanding the message which was for her alone.

“Well, Ted?”

“I’m no good. I hate to improve myself. I’m not even decently honest. I dumped Evelyn Harding in the lake yesterday and let Granny scold Larry for it. I don’t want to be in your old Round Table, anyway.” And Ted was on his feet and around the corner of the house before any one fully realized the force of his confession.

“My goodness! How dreadful!” groaned Tony. “What would Granny say?”

“Don’t tell her,” said Larry. “I don’t mind now.” And another clover fell in his lap, and, looking up, he met Miss Marjorie’s approving eyes.

“Did anybody know?” asked Tony. “I never suspected.”

“I did,” said Clare. “I saw him tip the boat. Served her right anyhow for being such a silly stuck up—oh!” And Clare clapped her hands over her mouth. “Gracious! This being a knightess is going to be some job,” she added, and the others laughed, though they secretly sympathized with her qualms.

“Let’s read ‘Sir Launfal,’ ” suggested Jean. “That will be a nice way to start, won’t it, Miss Marjorie?”

Miss Marjorie agreed, and Charley ran off to get the book. A few minutes later all was silent in the yard, save for Miss Marjorie’s low voice as she read aloud the beautiful Vision. Nobody said anything as she finished, but not one of the group but was better for having listened to the poet’s message of love and service and beauty. And then the town clock broke the spell by clanging out six sharp strokes.

“Oh my! It’s six o’clock already and table not set.” Clare sprang up and ran to the house, followed by her twin.

Larry and Tony fled hastily, mindful of uplifted eyebrows, if no worse penalty, accorded to tardiness at meals. Jean sat for a moment lost in revery, then she, too, rose.

“ ‘Scuse me, Miss Marjorie? I’ll go and help the twins as it is so late,” she said.

“Give me that magazine, will you, Jean?” asked Phil lazily.

Jean frowned a little and a retort quivered on her lips. Then she smiled, stooped for the magazine, and came over and handed it to her brother.

“At your service, Sir Knight,” she said.

Phil laughed, but had the grace to look a bit ashamed.

“Score one, Jeanie,” he admitted. “ ‘Bye, Miss Marjorie.”

That evening as Miss Marjorie was lying out in her orchard hammock among the katydids and fireflies, she was surprised to see a head appear above the wall and still more surprised when Ted appeared beside her.

“Please, I didn’t mean to be awfully rude

this afternoon," he stammered. "But I said just what I meant. I'm always in scrapes, and I'll have to be too awfully ashamed of 'em if I'm trying to be a knight and I can't stand it."

Miss Marjorie laughed.

"Teddy! Teddy! You have the cart before the horse. Trying to be a knight is going to help you to keep out of scrapes so you will have less repenting to do. Can't you stand that?"

"Maybe. I'll try. I told Granny I tipped Evelyn in on purpose," he added, balancing up and down on his toes in the grass.

"You did! Why, Ted, that was the most knight-like thing you could do."

He grinned.

"I guess Granny didn't see anything very knight-like about me. I got an awful lecture. Honest, Miss Marjorie, I couldn't help dumping her."

He chuckled reminiscently, and Miss Marjorie concluded with some inner amusement that his penitence wouldn't bear too close investigation. At least the main point was ac-

complished, however. Ted had taken the blame on his own shoulders fair and square, exonerating Larry, and had also applied, indirectly, for membership in the Round Table.

CHAPTER XVI

WATER 'SCAPES AND CONFESSIONS

“GEE, but the twins can dive!” ejaculated Ted admiringly as he watched, first Charley, then Clare, take a clean leap off the board into the deep water and come up, laughing and shaking the water out of their eyes.

“We’re all amphibious beasts,” laughed Phil. “We learned to swim almost as soon as we learned to walk.”

“Wish I had,” said Tony.

“You swim all right for a girl,” he conceded.

“Being a girl hasn’t anything to do with it. I only learned to swim two years ago and in a pool at that. I was merely thinking what a pity it was to have wasted so much time.”

“Measly shame,” Phil admitted. “How many of you can swim over to the island?”

"Can you?" Ted measured the distance with his eye and Larry looked dubious.

"Sure. I've done it and back, too."

"Come on. Let's all do it." And Tony splashed off into the water like a frog. Ted was after her in a moment.

"Coming, Larry?" he called back.

"Guess not." Larry's tone was carefully indifferent. Not for anything would he have Phil suspect how he hated being out beyond his depth in the water.

"Me neither. Too much like work." And Phil rolled over in the sand to take a sun bath. Moodily, Larry watched the two bobbing heads. The bare brown one was considerably ahead of the scarlet-capped one, for Ted was a swift swimmer. Presently the distance began to lengthen more markedly between the two swimmers, and suddenly, to Larry's consternation, the scarlet head disappeared entirely from view.

"Phil, can you see Tony?"

Phil sat up and scanned the water with a hand shading his eyes.

"Phil, I believe Tony's given out," called



“ WITHOUT A WORD PHIL FLASHED INTO THE WATER.”

Charley at the same moment from the board. "I saw her go down."

Without a word Phil flashed into the water and shot out in the direction Tony had been swimming, making his way swiftly, with long even strokes. But Larry sat motionless, paralyzed, for a moment. Then, recovering his wits, he unlocked the boat and set out after Phil.

Once Phil caught sight of the scarlet cap and redoubled his efforts, thankful he had his direction before the fleck of color vanished again. In what seemed to the watching twins an endless amount of time the bit of scarlet was again visible, and this time Phil was close beside it and Larry not far behind. Phil put out one hand and grasped Tony's bathing suit and was very much relieved to catch a glimpse of wide open, frightened dark eyes.

"All right," he gasped, having no breath for further speech. He did not even try to swim, just kept himself and Tony afloat until Larry was up with them. Between them the boys got Tony into the boat and she shut her

eyes and fell, limp and unconscious, in Larry's arms.

Phil took the oars and rowed as he had never rowed in his life to shore. Here he placed Tony face down in the sand and with the twins' help applied first aid to the injured in most approved and modern Scout fashion. It was only a moment before she opened her eyes and they realized with relief that she was breathing naturally though a little gaspingly. Suddenly she sat up.

"I'm all right," she announced. "Oh, Phil! Never so glad—see anybody—my life."

"Mutual pleasure," said Phil, sitting down rather limply in the sand and wiping his forehead where great beads of perspiration stood out. He didn't care to think of what might have happened if he had been much later.

By this time Ted swam in, prepared to rally Tony for giving out so easily and was considerably upset when the twins delivered the tale of the adventure, sparing him none of the harrowing details. Laurence stood

by white and silent. Nobody paid any attention to him. Phil was unmistakably the hero of the occasion.

“Gee, but I was glad to see you and the boat, Larry!” said Phil presently. “I was some tuckered out, and Tony wasn’t precisely a help to locomotion.”

“I should say I wasn’t. I felt made of lead. Thanks to you and Larry I’m—here.” Tony smiled a little tremulously at Larry, a smile which was a little too much for him. Tony didn’t suspect that he had been afraid to swim out to save her. She was thanking him and he had been—a coward.

Solemnly the procession went up the Hill and, little by little, on their arrival the thrilling story got told, the twins, being the least exhausted and impressed, doing most of the talking. Tony was straightway consigned to bed in spite of her protests that she was quite all right and under no necessity of being treated like an invalid.

“You are a knight, all right,” said Charley to Phil later at home. “Wish I could do something big like that.”

“Nonsense,” said Phil. “Anybody would have done the same.”

“But nobody did. I thought for a moment Larry wasn’t going to do a thing.”

“He did the best thing he could have done,” said Phil heartily. “I don’t know just where I should have come out if he hadn’t been there with the boat in the nick of time.”

“I don’t care, I think what you did was the knightiest,” declared Charley. “Don’t you, Mother?”

Mrs. Lambert smiled but did not answer. Perhaps she thought the “knightiest” of all was Phil’s generous dividing of the honors.

That evening Dr. Phil was called to visit a patient several miles out of town, and as he hurried off his eyes fell on Larry huddled into a rather disconsolate heap in the hammock, and invited him to come along for a drive. Somehow it struck the doctor that he didn’t know Larry as well as he knew the others. He wondered to-night, as the lad sat silent beside him, just what was going on

inside that quiet outer crust. That there was trouble of some sort he guessed shrewdly.

“What is it, Larry?” he asked, suddenly turning on the boy and finding him off guard read utter misery in the gray eyes. “You are not brooding over that affair of Tony’s, are you? She is all right, thanks to you and Phil.”

“Thanks to Phil,” corrected Larry stiffly.

The tone made the doctor wonder if the boy could possibly be jealous of Phil’s superior meed of glory for the afternoon’s adventure. In a moment, however, enlightenment came, unexpectedly.

“Uncle Phil, I’m a coward. I was afraid to swim to Tony this afternoon.” At last it was out, that hideous secret that had never before crossed the lad’s lips.

“What you did was quite as much to the purpose. You are not as expert a swimmer as Phil. I doubt if you could have done any good that way.”

“It isn’t what I did. It’s what I felt. I told you I was afraid.”

Dr. Phil bit his lip and wished hard for

guidance. He realized that this was no mere boyish notion but a soul tragedy.

"Have you ever been afraid before?" he asked.

"Lots of times. I've just made myself do all kinds of fool things so as to keep everybody from knowing I was afraid."

"That doesn't sound very cowardly, Larry."

But Larry would accept no mitigation of his own verdict.

"Ted isn't afraid of anything. He swam 'way out to-day without a thought, and he used to ride all the crazy horses in the barracks that I was afraid to go near. And Tony isn't scared of anything, either. She goes off the diving-board without a bit of hesitation and I have to drive myself to it. I'm not like them, Uncle Phil. There's no use pretending I am. They're like father. I'm—a coward."

"I doubt it. See here, Larry. I believe you have let yourself get morbid over this thing. I don't believe at heart you are any more a coward than I am. Recklessness isn't

courage. Maybe Ted and Tony have more of that quality than you have, but it doesn't prove they have more of the real thing. Anyway, your cowardice has yet to be proved to me. The very quality of will which makes you dive even though you are afraid will come to your aid when you need it."

"It didn't to-day."

"I diagnose that rather differently. You were paralyzed for a moment by fright, not for yourself but for Tony. The moment you came to, you acted very sensibly and efficiently. It is quite possible Tony owes her life as much to you as to Phil."

"I don't know, Uncle Phil. I'd like to let myself out that way but I don't believe I can."

"The brave man isn't the man who rushes unthinking into danger but the one who knows the risk and does his duty, fear or no fear."

"But I didn't," persisted Larry.

"I believe you will next time. And, lad, you have shown more than once this summer that you have plenty of the finest kind of courage—moral courage."

Laurence looked up gratefully.

“Does that really count? Miss Marjorie said so, but I wasn’t sure.”

“Miss Marjorie! Oh, the Round Table business? Yes, Larry, you can bank pretty well on what Miss Marjorie says as being straight. Moral courage is one of the biggest qualities in the world. Hang on to yours.”

“Oh, Uncle Phil! You make me feel as if I might be some good after all.”

“And high time. Promise me, Larry, you’ll get rid of this coward nonsense for good and all. If there is anything in it, fight it when the time comes. Until then, forget it.”

Larry drew a long breath.

“All right, Uncle Phil. I’ll try. Anyway, you have made me feel a heap better. I didn’t see how I was ever going to be a soldier.”

“I doubt if your father intends either of you boys to follow his profession. There is going to be plenty of fighting to do wherever you are, though. I’m something of a fighter myself. Only I have to battle with germs

and ignorance instead of Indians," he smiled.

"That's right," said Larry. "I never thought of it that way. I'd like to be a doctor, Uncle Phil."

"I should like to have you, Larry. Put that idea away in your head and turn it over occasionally. It isn't a bad thing to have a notion or two about what we want to make of ourselves. Here we are. Will you come in or stay out with Gyp?"

"Oh, I'll stay out, please."

And outside, under the stars, Larry Holiday sat and thought very hard. And somehow out of the night it seemed as if he gathered strength and a new hope and faith in himself.

"If there is anything in it, fight it when the time comes. Until then forget it." These words of his uncle's he turned over and over in his mind.

CHAPTER XVII

DR. PHIL'S FOURTH

"ASLEEP, Tony?" Dr. Phil opened the door of his niece's room to ask after he returned from his drive with Larry.

"No, indeedy. Wide awake as anything. I told you there was no sense in sending me to bed." And Tony, sitting up with her hands clasped behind her head and her brown eyes dancing with excitement, certainly didn't look very much like an invalid. "Come in, Uncle Phil. I've just got to talk to somebody. Ever since they put me here, somebody's been saying 'Don't talk,' till I'm nearly wild."

He came in and sat down on the bed beside her.

"I want to hear the story from your side, if you feel equal to telling it. Little girl, we have a very great deal to be thankful for to-night."

Tony nodded gravely.

“I know, Uncle Phil. I’ve been thinking a lot as I’ve been lying here. People—human beings—are pretty small, aren’t they? We think we are so strong and important and cocksure of ourselves. And then all in a minute we are just—nothing. I was having the loveliest time swimming. I felt as if I could go on forever and then my feet got tangled up in some weeds and I couldn’t kick and I got panicky feeling and awfully, awfully tired. I just couldn’t make myself work any more. I tried to keep afloat but I never learned how, very well. I always wanted to be swimming. Uncle Phil, I went down, clear down, twice, and the second time I thought I was drowning, and I just made myself come up and there was Phil. Wasn’t he splendid, Uncle Phil?”

“Yes, Phil is usually on hand in an emergency, and he is one of my star pupils in the first aid business. Tony, dear, do you remember any one ever saying anything to you about not swimming too far?”

Tony nodded meekly.

“Yes, Uncle Phil. You’ve said it more than once, and Daddy wrote it. I guess I should have remembered sooner, but please don’t scold. Truly, I feel dreadfully small and humble.”

“I am too thankful to have you safe to do any scolding. Besides, I think you have had a sufficient lesson on the folly of being foolish,” he smiled. “Did you eat any supper?”

“I should say I did. Granny brought me in the loveliest trayful of things that she fixed herself for me. She was so sweet and kind and never scolded a bit, and, Uncle Phil, I ’most know there were tears in her eyes when she kissed me good-night. I do believe she does care.”

“Of course she cares, Tony. You must feel that.”

“I did. I do. I put my arms around her—just like this—and neither of us said a word but I guess the bridge is in working order.”

The next morning when Dr. Phil was busy with letters in his office he heard a knock at

the door and in response to his invitation Dick entered, pausing half apologetically in the doorway. The boy had been down-stairs several days now and though still pale and thin and weak was quite well again. All he needed now was to build up strength with good food and fresh air. Dr. Phil had slung a hammock in the back yard and ordered him to stay still and get strong. The children came to talk to him frequently, especially Tony, who regarded him as her particular property and "bossed" him and fussed over him and amused him according to her will. Mrs. Holiday had been inclined to put a stop to this growing intimacy but Dr. Phil had intervened.

"Tony will do him more good than he can possibly do her harm," he asserted. "Indeed it is rather good for her to think of somebody beside herself." And since the children were in his hands Mrs. Holiday acquiesced albeit reluctantly.

"Well, my lad, what can I do for you?" asked Dr. Phil, pleasantly.

"May I talk to you a few moments?"

“Certainly. Sit down.” And Dr. Phil indicated a comfortable Morris chair opposite his desk where he could watch the boy’s face.

“I’m ’most well. I gotter go.”

“Are you in a hurry to leave us?”

Dick flushed.

“ ’Tain’t that. I’d like to stay forever. But I can’t take charity. I ain’t that kind. I’ve gotter earn my livin’ some way.”

“Right spirit, Dick. I am glad you feel that way. When the time comes we will find work for you, but I should like to have you stay a week or two longer with us until I am satisfied you are perfectly strong. You aren’t fit to work yet.”

“No more I ain’t,” grunted Dick. “I’m as wobbly as a new born calf. But I don’t see how I kin ever pay ye back for all ye’ve done,” he added.

“Pay is of more than one kind,” said the doctor. “Some is money. Some isn’t. I don’t happen to need the money kind, but there is plenty you can do for me.”

“What?” Dick leaned forward in the big

chair and looked ready to promise anything.

Dr. Phil opened a drawer in his desk and took out three photographs, and with them in his hand came round and perched on the arm of Dick's chair.

“See these three chaps. I call them my boys. This one is earning his way through Dartmouth College. This fellow here has just finished his course in Medical School and has hung out a shingle of his own this summer. This one—” He lifted the third picture and his voice softened. “This one is dead—gave his life to save a child's. Fine fellows, every one of them. Don't you think so?”

Dick nodded, wondering just what the connection was between these three well-dressed, well-educated young men and his humble self.

“This first one,” Dr. Phil went back, “was brought up in a saloon. He had no father, and his mother was the kind the least said about the better. I ran into him through some investigation work I was doing in Boston. I happened to know of a man here in town who wanted a boy so I got him to come

home with me. He was twelve then. He is twenty now—good student, champion pole vaulter and one of the finest, cleanest, young chaps you ever saw in your life. And the strongest thing about him is his loathing of drink in all forms. I did very little for that boy, simply gave him a chance, and he was big enough to take it and make the best of it. He has paid me a thousand times over, and will again when he gets his shoulder to the wheel, outside college walls. He is a born reformer, and he's going to fight King Alcohol with every breath of his body."

Dick's eyes were wistful as Dr. Phil laid down the photograph.

"I'd like to be somebody like that," he said.

"Of course you would, and you can do it, too. Now here's Max Storey—Dr. Storey now. I found him half frozen in the snow. He had run away from a beast of a step-father who had beaten him until he had no more spirit and life than a jelly fish. I got him home and doctored up his body. That was an easy job in comparison with healing

his mind and spirit. We finally got him to the point where he could hold up his head like a man but it took more than one year and a good deal of heartache all around. He stayed with us, as we needed a boy at the time. Late, he went to High School and got fascinated with chemistry and biology. He borrowed money to put himself through two years of college, then worked in a druggist shop and paid it back, studying medicine with a doctor friend of mine at the same time. Now he is a full-fledged physician and a very promising one. Incidentally, he is a man, every bit of him, with more character to the square inch than anybody I know. I am proud of Max."

The doctor laid down this photograph, too, and then took up the third, a picture of a handsome, clear-eyed lad of eighteen or so.

"This is Carey McCosh," he said. "I made his acquaintance while he was still in reform school. I kept track of him, for I knew there was good stuff in him. As soon as he got out I found him a home with a sweet saint of a woman here in town, who loved

him back into decency and self-respect and character. Ready enough he was to meet her half way, too. It was just recklessness and bad home training that had started him wrong. He was as sound as a nut at the heart. He was nearly through High School, an honor pupil and crack athlete and beloved by everybody, when the end came. He snatched the little granddaughter of the lady he lived with from under some horses' hoofs but he couldn't save himself. He died a few hours later. I shall never forget the shine in his eyes as he whispered, 'I'm not afraid to die, Dr. Phil. I'm glad the baby's all right, anyway.' "

Dick snuffled a little and drew his hand across his eyes but he did not speak.

"Those are my three boys, Dick. They never one of them gave me a cent of money but you can judge for yourself if you think I've been paid for the little I was able to do for them. I am offering you the same chance they had. I'll stand sponsor for you these next five years and if you turn out as well as the other three did I'll ask no more of you.

How about it, Dick? Will you be my Fourth?"

Dick caught his breath in a sound which was very like a sob.

" 'F ye'll let me," he choked out. "Thank ye for tellin' me 'bout tothers. I'll remember them. I'm sorter glad they started bad, too. Makes me feel 'sif there might be some show for me."

Dr. Phil glanced at the bowl of white water lilies on his desk, which Tony always kept supplied with flowers. He reached over and drew out one, a great golden-hearted flower.

"These grew out of the mud, Dick," he said. "It doesn't matter so much how you start. It's how you end."

"Guess that's right," mused Dick. "Jim's folks had money and schoolin' but that didn't make him any more decent."

He rose to go but lingered as if he had something still on his mind.

"Well?" encouraged the doctor.

"D'ye mind if I keeps the name the little girl give me? It's sorter silly but I'd kinder like to."

Dr. Phil considered a moment.

“I don’t see why you shouldn’t,” he said. “It is a good name, Dick. Fine men and women have borne it. See that you keep it clean.”

“That I will, damme if I don’t. Oh—!” And his face flamed crimson. “I didn’t mean to say that.”

Dr. Phil smiled.

“That is something you can begin to attend to right away,” he suggested. “And when you are a bit stronger I would try to get in some studying. I’ll get Larry to help you, if he will. I want you to be ready for school in the fall.”

“School!” Dick’s jaw dropped.

“Surely. Don’t you want to go to school?”

“Should say I did. Oh-h!” And, unable to stand the stress of his own emotions, Dick precipitately bolted.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE FAMILY CATASTROPHE

EARLY in August, at Jean's insistence, heartily seconded by Phil and the twins, Mrs. Lambert was sent off for a few days' holiday with a beloved cousin in a nearby town. She departed willingly enough, feeling that with Jean in charge, possessed of her new patience and her old reliability, and with Miss Marjorie close at hand, things could not go very badly.

It was the second day after her mother's departure that Jean opened a letter which called forth an exclamation of consternation.

"What is it? Anything wrong?" asked Charley, pausing, dustcloth in hand.

"Aunt Charlotte is coming!" announced Jean in tragic tones.

"Aunt Charlotte! Jean, she *can't!*" wailed Clare.

"But she can. She's on her way now. The

letter should have reached here last night."

Charley sank into a chair, fanning herself with her dustcloth.

"Telephone for Mother!" she groaned.
"We'll never live through it alone."

"I don't like to spoil Mother's vacation,"
dubiously from Jean.

"I should say not," emphatically from Clare. "We ought to be ashamed of ourselves to even think of it. It's the first vacation she's had in years and I say we'd better let her enjoy it in peace."

"So do I," agreed Phil, emerging from a book to join the conference. "We'll weather the storm somehow, with Jean at the helm."

Jean sent him a grateful smile. Phil was awfully nice to her since she came back from Fairyland and she appreciated it.

"We'll have to dust all over again the last minute before she gets here," said Charley. "She'd see a speck no bigger than a needle's eye. She's got the most awful eyes herself. I just hate her."

"Oh, Charley!" reproved Jean, half-heartedly. "She's Mother's sister."

"Only step," disclaimed Charley unabashed.

"Must have been a giant step at that," laughed Clare. "They're as different as different. When's she coming, anyway?"

"This afternoon," Jean consulted the letter to answer. "She gets in at a quarter of four. You'll have to meet her, Phil."

Phil groaned but acquiesced.

Later, at dinner, Aunt Charlotte's visit was the chief topic of conversation and dire prophecy, viewed by all the younger members of the family as little short of a catastrophe.

"Don't worry, Jean," said Mr. Lambert as he left the house. "You will get on all right, I am sure. As for the rest of you, get into line and help all you can."

"We'll be angels of mercy,
Angels of light,"

promised Clare.

"You'd better not sing to welcome the pilgrim or she'll throw a fit," warned Phil.

"Honest, we'll be awful good," seconded Charley.

“I’ll let Aunt Charlotte hold my kittens,” contributed Eleanor, which generous proffer was received with glee by the rest of the family, and the wholesale laughter cleared the rather dense air.

By two-thirty the house was in “apple-pie order” and everything ready for supper so far as the meal could be prepared in advance.

“There! There isn’t another ghost of a thing to do, so far as I can see,” said Clare. “Do go and rest, Jean. You look tired to death. Charley and I are going for a paddle to revive our spirits. We’ll get some flowers.”

“All right, only do get back in season to receive Aunt Charlotte. She would never forgive us if we weren’t all lined up to meet her. Eleanor, go and get in your bed this minute. You ought to have been napping long ago. Phil, don’t forget to go to the station on time.”

And, having delivered her last instructions, Jean fled to her room for an hour’s rest and was soon fast asleep. Eleanor, how-

ever, did not find sleep so easy. After waiting a due interval for Nature's sweet restorer to appear she climbed out of bed and went down-stairs. Not a soul was visible, and suddenly she conceived the notion that it would be a delicate attention to Aunt Charlotte to make her some fudge. She had made candy several times under the twins' supervision and felt perfectly equal to the task.

“ 'Course, I can make it. I know the recipe just as well's I know my five tables. Two cups sugar, two squares choc'late, half cup of milk, butter size of an egg,” she chanted softly as she went about her preparations. “Hope Jean will stay asleep. She never lets me do things, and I just know I can make fudge. Won't Aunt Charlotte be s'prised?”

She started her concoction cooking over the gas stove with the flame at full blaze, but as the mixture did not melt instantaneously she grew tired of waiting and ran to play with her kittens for a few moments. One of the fluffy mites had crawled out of his basket and ambled off somewhere and it took

a good ten minutes to find the fugitive. The result of the intermission in fudge making was Jean's sudden awakening to a sickening smell of burning chocolate. She flew downstairs to discover a discouragingly sticky and mal-odorous mass seething over her clean gas stove.

The twins were invisible, but to Jean's horror she heard steps on the piazza and Phil's voice calling, "Where are you, Jean? Aunt Charlotte's here." She sent a dismayed glance at the clock. It was only three-thirty. Wasn't it for all the world like Aunt Charlotte to be ahead of time? Phil stuck his head into the kitchen.

"Schedule's been changed. Luckily I discovered it in time or she'd have had spasms at not being met. My word! What a mess! Phew!" And Phil backed out, shutting the door behind him.

Jean smoothed her rumpled hair hastily before the little mirror, and with flushed cheeks and woeful consciousness of her untidy appearance went to meet her aunt.

"What is burning?" sniffed the latter as

soon as she had deposited a peck of a kiss on her niece's hot cheek.

"Nothing," said Jean. "At least not now. Something was."

"I should say so. So this is the fine house-keeping I've heard so much about. For mercy's sake! What a dirty child!" For at this point Eleanor made her appearance, with a kitten under each arm, and face and dress besmeared with chocolate.

"Jeanie, my fudge all burned up!" she wailed, running to hide her face in Jean's dress.

"You'd no business to be making fudge!" snapped Jean crossly. "March upstairs this minute. You're a naughty, naughty girl."

"Don't want to march!" screamed Eleanor, the unfortunate word and the harsh tone proving like a red rag to a bull.

Phil could hardly help bursting into a peal of laughter. Jean's anger, Eleanor's unusual bad behavior, and Aunt Charlotte's expression of scandalized disgust, were almost too much for his self control.

"Shoo fly, you infant," he ordered, com-

ing to the rescue. "Race you to the bathroom," and Eleanor permitted herself to be persuaded to disappear.

"I just wanted to make fudge for Aunt Charlotte," she explained, as Phil wiped off the sticky rivers, compounded of tears and chocolate, from the small perturbed face. "Jean needn't have said I was naughty. I wasn't naughty—not the leastest bit."

"My O!" grinned Phil cheerfully. "You can't always tell from appearances whether folks are naughty or not. Don't you be bothering Jean. She has her hands full."

"I suppose at least I can be shown to my room," Aunt Charlotte was saying in the martyred tone the young Lamberts always found particularly obnoxious.

"Why, yes," began Jean. "Come right up—"

But just then Clare appeared in the doorway with her arms full of goldenrod and looking sweet and dainty and amiable enough to make up for the rest of the family. Unfortunately, before this impression had a chance to sink in, the dining-room door opened and

Charley stood on the threshold, stocking-footed, dripping muddy water from head to foot.

“Jean, I fell overboard—oh, Aunt Charlotte, I didn’t know you were here. ’Scuse me if I don’t come any nearer. I’m a little muddy.”

“For Heaven’s sake, don’t come near!” Aunt Charlotte drew back her silken skirts in horror at the bare idea of such contamination. “How did you ever get in such a state?”

“Tried to get some lilies while Clare got goldenrod on shore,” explained Charley cheerfully. “I leaned over a mite too far, that’s all. I’m going up the back stairs, Jean.”

“For mercy’s sake, I don’t see how Marian dares leave you a minute. I never saw such dreadful children. Clarissa—if you are Clarissa—you seem to be the only one in your right senses. Will you be so good as to escort me to my room? Don’t come near me with that goldenrod, though. It gives me hay fever.”

Clare laid down her burden and as she followed her aunt up-stairs turned to bestow what was intended as a comforting wink upon poor Jean. As soon as they were out of sight Jean, too, mounted the stairs and found Phil "valeting" Eleanor into a clean white dress, as he described the process.

"Don't scold, Jeanie," begged Eleanor. "Phil says I oughtn't to have made fudge, but I didn't mean to be naughty."

"It doesn't matter," groaned Jean. "We are all in disgrace except Clare. I hope you are still in favor, Phil."

"Can't say as to that, mum. But I shan't stay in favor if she pitches into you about once more, that's certain."

Which belligerent threat soothed Jean surprisingly, and brought a faint smile to her lips as she ran off to her own room to make herself presentable at last.

CHAPTER XIX

SOME MORE OF THE SAME AND LARRY

FIFTEEN minutes later when Jean came down-stairs, rehabilitated and mentally fortified by cold water and a change of raiment, she found Phil waiting for her below, lounging in the window seat.

“Keep a stiff upper lip, Jeanie,” he advised. “And don’t you care how that old crank—” But here he broke off hastily, for as luck would have it Aunt Charlotte was at the moment descending the stairs with Clare, a dutiful page, at her heels.

“Upon my word!” ejaculated the incensed Aunt Charlotte. “So I am to be insulted in my own sister’s home!”

Phil’s face was scarlet but he saved the day gallantly.

“I was talking about the ice cream freezer,” he lied gamely. “If that’s insulting, why—” He broke off and Clare nearly

imperiled the newly rescued day by a fatal giggle but stuffed her handkerchief over her mouth instead.

“H-mp!” grunted Aunt Charlotte suspiciously. But she condescended with some degree of graciousness to allow Clare to escort her to a comfortable rocker on the porch and provide her with the evening newspapers and a palm-leaf fan. Whereupon her niece fled, murmuring an excuse about supper, and joined Jean and Phil in the dining-room.

“Phil, you’re a gem of purest ray serene. I never heard a neater whopper.”

Phil grinned but looked a little ashamed.

“I had to say something, didn’t I? I couldn’t let Mums be hopelessly disgraced because I hadn’t the sense to keep a civil tongue in my head. I’d have liked to tell her the whole blessed truth,” he added. “Now, then, Jean, what can I do?”

“Nothing but keep one eye on Eleanor and the other on Aunt Charlotte.”

“I’ll be cross-eyed sure if I do that latter,” he said with a shrug. “But I’m a sworn in martyr, so here goes.”

Supper went off fairly well. A kind of chastened caution pervaded the household, at least its younger members, and Aunt Charlotte would have been hypercritical indeed, to have found any fault in Jean's delicious rolls and chicken patties and amber tea. When the cake was cut Phil happened to take the first taste and hastily took a swallow of water, trying at the same time to signal Jean. Too late! Aunt Charlotte had taken a generous bite and was already choking and gasping. Clare, feeling responsible as the perpetrator of the cake, took a cautious nibble.

"Salt!" she gasped. "Look out, everybody. Goodness, Jean! I didn't put in that much. I know I didn't."

"My fault," groaned Charley. "I emptied the salt bag into the sugar bucket by mistake and forgot to clean it out. I'm awful sorry."

"Never mind. Bring us some cookies, Clare. We'll skip the cake course," and Mr. Lambert's reassuring smile was balm to the three mortified housekeepers.

"If this is the way Marian trains her girls,

I tremble for their husbands," observed Aunt Charlotte tartly, still making grimaces over that unfortunate first taste of cake.

"Glad she thinks we are going to have husbands. More'n she ever got," retorted Charley inwardly.

"Oh, the girls are fine little housekeepers," said Mr. Lambert. "You must stay long enough to see how well they get along usually. You evidently happened in on an unlucky day," he smiled comfortably.

To the relief of all, Aunt Charlotte announced her intention of retiring early that evening, and after she had gone up-stairs Jean poured out the whole tragic tale of misadventures in her father's ears.

"Cheer up, Jeanie. It has been a bad beginning, but I don't see that any of it was very much anybody's fault and certainly not yours. Just make the best of things and you will come out all right."

"Anyway she can't accuse us of being fresh with her, after that cake," chuckled Phil.

"Jean! Clarissa! Charlotte! Come here

this moment!" pealed a shrill voice from the upper regions.

The girls rushed up-stairs to their aunt's room and met Eleanor coming out with woe on her face and her arms full of kittens.

"She sat on my darlingest kittens an' I'm 'fraid they're squashed," she lamented loudly. "An' she frew 'em out the door."

Aunt Charlotte was close behind, clad in a purple kimono and with her hair twisted into a tight knot, minus the "front." Her expression betrayed extreme high dudgeon.

"This is a little too much! I found those disgusting creatures in my chair. I never heard anything so disgraceful in my life. I simply can't abide cats."

"She frew 'em out the door," repeated Eleanor, quite as indignant as her aunt.

"Eleanor, did you put your kittens in Aunt Charlotte's room?" demanded Jean.

"No, I didn't. They were on the foot of my bed."

"Oh, dear!" exclaimed Clare. "They must have found Aunt Charlotte's door open and wandered in and made themselves at

home. It's a shame, Auntie. You are having a dreadful time, and we are awfully sorry."

"You'd better be. You seem to be the only one here who has any sense or manners. You may come and rub my head with aromatic spirits of ammonia. I'm all upset, and no wonder."

"Whew! I'm thankful it's you who've got the sense and manners," whispered Charley as they filed out. "Your reward is altogether out of proportion to your virtues," she giggled when they were safely out of hearing.

"Where is the ammonia, Jean?" asked Clare resignedly. "Bet I'll spill it down her neck or something."

But she didn't, and in fact she managed to minister so well to her aunt's needs that the latter went to sleep quite mollified.

In the meantime Jean soothed Eleanor's wrath and comforted her with the assurance that the kittens did not appear to be appreciably damaged by the strenuous treatment to which they had been subjected, while Charley escaped down-stairs to regale her father and

Phil with the latest chapter in the day's tale of woes.

"I only hope she has been made miserable enough so she'll take the first train in the morning," she concluded.

"Well, I don't," said Jean, coming in. "Mother would feel dreadfully if she went away thinking we were such a set of heathen as we've looked like to-day. I hope she'll stay and find we are really a pretty decent lot. Things like this don't happen once in a blue moon, do they, Daddy Lambert?"

"Not once in a cherry-colored one," he agreed laughing. "That's the spirit, Captain Jean. Now to bed every last one of you, before anything else can happen."

As a matter of fact, the rest of Aunt Charlotte's stay was unmarred by untoward accident of any kind, and she was forced rather grudgingly to admit to her sister when the latter returned that "they were not such bad children, after all." Which, considering the source, Mrs. Lambert concluded was quite lavish praise. Her husband's verdict was considerably more enthusiastic.

“They were trumps, Marian, every one of them. You couldn’t ask anything more heroic than the way the whole bunch rallied around Jean. I doubt if they could have borne the strain of it three months ago and stood by you and each other the way they did.”

“I suspect the Round Table has something to do with that,” said Mrs. Lambert. “They have grown a good deal this summer.”

And, as it happened, over across the street, the Round Table was undergoing another test. Dr. Phil sat at his office desk while Larry slouched moodily in the big chair opposite.

“I don’t want to do any tutoring this summer, Uncle Phil. It’s vacation. Wait until fall and I’ll help Dick, if he’s got to be helped,” ungraciously.

“Lazy Larry!” commented his uncle with a humorous twinkle. Then he sobered. “See here, Larry, how would you like to swap places with Dick? How would you like to have had scarcely a year’s schooling all together—to hunger for education with all your

might and find it always just out of reach? How would you like to be fifteen and barely ready for the seventh grade?"

"Wouldn't like it," said Larry shortly. "But I don't see any use in imagining things. I'm not Dick Nobody. I'm Larry Holiday."

"Granted. You and Dick are pretty much what circumstances have made of you, and, in some ways, they have done better with Dick than they have with you."

That stung. Larry sat up.

"What do you mean, Uncle Phil?" he demanded.

"Dick is neither lazy nor selfish. You are both, rather often."

Larry flushed and fell to studying the pattern of the rug.

"You are very much interested in seeing that Larry Holiday gets what he wants in this world. I'd like to see you a shade more concerned about the other fellow." Dr. Phil's tone was a little stern, and Larry wriggled under it.

"I'm no worse than Ted," he retorted somewhat aggressively.

“I don’t know that that has anything especial to do with the matter in hand, but, since you mention it, I have noticed that Ted is considerably more thoughtful of Dick’s feelings and more willing to draw him into the good times than you are. I’ve also noticed a few incipient signs of first-class snob-bishness in Larry Holiday, and when I’ve seen them I have felt inclined—to operate.”

Larry got up and walked over to the window, gazing out into the starlit night. Presently he turned and came back to where his uncle sat.

“You hit pretty hard, Uncle Phil,” he said gruffly.

“I know I do, Larry. It is because I think you are worth hitting hard that I do it. If I thought you were no better than you have shown yourself on the surface to-night, I don’t know that I should bother to give you a chance to redeem yourself. Remember, I do not in the least insist upon this tutoring business. But I should be glad for Dick’s sake and for yours if you decide to help him. Will you think it over, Larry?”

Larry nodded, and his uncle couldn't quite decide whether he was still sulking or not.

"Do you know what the Round Table motto is?" asked the boy suddenly and unexpectedly.

Dr. Phil smiled a little and bent to examine the handle of a paper knife which lay on the desk before him.

"I heard it was 'I serve.' Is that it, Larry?" He looked up and met the direct gaze of the clear gray eyes. Again the boy nodded. "I didn't intend to rub my point in quite so hard. You are taking a shot at yourself, young man."

"I know," admitted Larry. "I meant to. Uncle Phil, I don't need to think it over. I've decided—to help Dick."

CHAPTER XX

DISAPPEARANCES

So it happened that Dick became officially Larry's pupil, and the two boys spent two hours, at least, daily, with books, besides the weary time when Dick wrestled alone or had Tony "give out" spelling words and correct his speaking vocabulary. He was pathetically anxious to "talk like folks," and painstakingly pruned and adjusted the language at his command with this end in view. Slow and tedious as the process was, he did make some progress, and Larry found him far from being a dull pupil. Both boys were the better for the work together, and Dr. Phil, watching out of the corner of his eye, concluded that he would not have to "operate" again on his nephew.

Dick was quite well again now and had found a "job" helping Sam Jewett with chores and other like work about the farm,

though Dr. Phil kept a sharp outlook on him and would not permit heavy tasks of any kind. So things went on happily until a crisis arrived.

One morning, directly after breakfast, Mrs. Holiday summoned her three grandchildren to the library. Her face was so stern each one wondered what the others could have been doing. It was evident there was trouble brewing for somebody. They filed into the library and were not exactly relieved to find their uncle there, looking grave and troubled. It was obviously a family conference of some ominous significance. Mrs. Holiday gave each, in turn, a severely scrutinizing glance. "Enough to make you look guilty if you weren't," Ted said afterward.

"Children, I have lost some money—a five dollar bill which I laid on my desk last night about five o'clock. After supper it was not there. Do any of you know anything about it?"

"Haven't seen it." "'Course not."
"Not a thing," came the instant response.
"Granny, you don't think any of us would

take money that didn't belong to us, do you?" Larry added a little indignantly.

"No, I couldn't believe that, but the disappearance is very peculiar and I wanted to be sure none of you knew anything about it."

"I remember seeing a bill on your desk before supper," said Larry, "while I was working with Dick. How funny! Wonder where it could have gone."

Mrs. Holiday shot a significant look at her son.

"You were here with Dick, before supper?" the latter asked, addressing Larry.

"Yes. What makes you look so queer, Uncle Phil? You don't think Dick took it?"

"I don't want to think so," emphatically.

"But he couldn't. I was right here with him until—" He broke off abruptly.

"Until when?" pursued his uncle.

"I'd rather not say."

"I insist upon your answering," sharply from Mrs. Holiday.

But Larry's mouth shut like a steel trap.

"Dick never took it!" flashed Tony.

"You needn't try to make us think he did!"

Just because he's poor and has nobody to stand up for him, you think you can accuse him of everything! I think it's mean—mean!" hotly.

Mrs. Holiday looked as if she didn't know which she would like to chastise more, her stubborn grandson or her impertinent granddaughter.

"That will do, Tony." Dr. Phil spoke with rare sternness. "We are not accusing any one at present, but we must know the facts. Don't you see, Larry, that your keeping still cannot help Dick's case any? You were with him until when?" he harked back.

Larry bit his lip, but beneath his uncle's kind but compelling gaze decided he might as well give in.

"I was with him until the bell rang and I went off in a hurry because I wasn't ready for supper."

"Leaving Dick here alone?"

"Yes, sir," reluctantly.

"There, I knew no good would come of taking in a mere tramp like that. He is no better than a common thief."

“Granny, I don’t think that’s a bit fair,” said Larry. “Just because he was alone with the money doesn’t prove he took it, does it, Uncle Phil?”

“It certainly makes it a little harder for him to prove himself innocent. Yet I, for one, can hardly believe him guilty.”

“Well, I can, very easily. What can you expect of a low—”

“He isn’t low!” blazed Tony. “And I know he didn’t steal your old money, and I’ll never, never forgive you if you tell him he did!”

“Antoinette, you forget yourself! Leave the room at once!”

And Tony flounced stormily out of the room in obedience to her grandmother’s incensed command.

“I have no doubt that the boy took the money,” continued Mrs. Holiday dogmatically. “Will you speak to him, Philip, or shall I?”

And just then the subject of the discussion appeared in the doorway.

“Good morning. Larry, did I leave my

arithmetic book over here, last night?" he asked.

Larry sent him a queer, straight look.

"It's on the desk," he answered, and shot out of the room, followed hastily by Ted. Guilty or not guilty, neither had any desire to see the other lad badgered before that tribunal.

Dr. Phil went straight to the point. He told of the disappearance of the money and the damaging fact that Dick himself had been the last person in the room with it, so far as was known. Dick turned scarlet, then deadly white.

"Dr. Holiday, ye—you think I took it?" he asked after a minute.

"I have to ask you a question first, Dick. Did you take it?"

"I did not," Dick replied. The answer was low but firm and perfectly distinct. "I saw it there on the desk. I remember now. But I didn't touch it."

Dr. Phil stood silent, perplexed, watching the boy's face.

"I suppose you think I done—did it?"

The boy then turned to Mrs. Holiday to ask.

“I certainly do,” coldly.

“Well, I didn’t, but I can’t prove I didn’t. I’ll turn over the three dollars and nineteen cents I’ve earned and—and git.” He choked a little as he turned away.

Dr. Phil came over and put a kind hand on the boy’s shoulder.

“Don’t be hasty, Dick, and don’t leave us in anger. We don’t want your money. We want only to believe in you.”

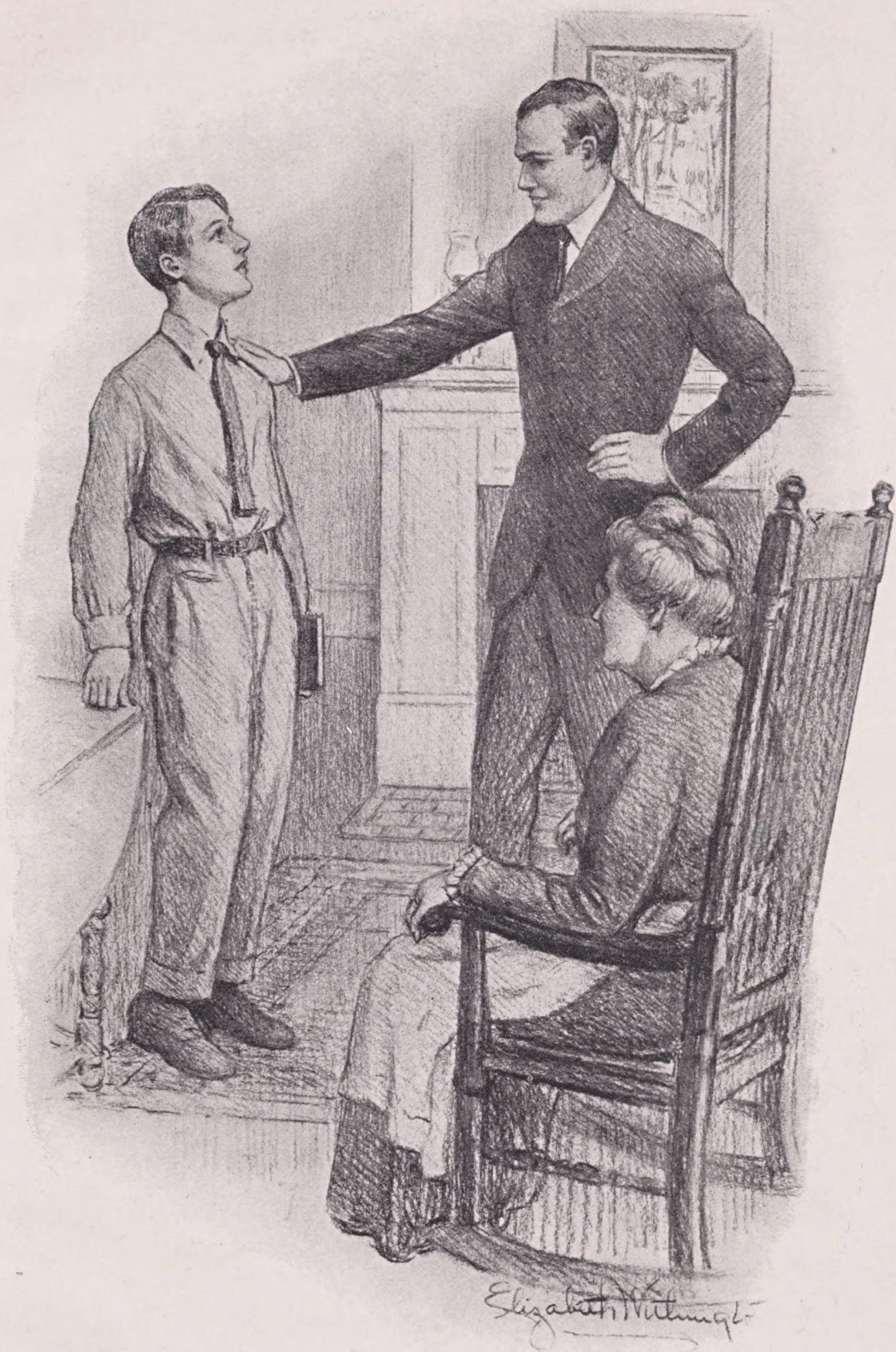
“Wal, ye can’t,” bitterly, relapsing into the old lingo.

“I’d like to try. I’d like to say this minute, ‘I believe you, Dick.’ ”

“But ye can’t?” It was a question this time, with a little wistful note in it.

“Not quite, Dick. I’m sorry. See here, lad, if you did yield to the temptation of the moment you will be none the worse off for owning up. You needn’t be afraid to tell the truth. I am asking you just as I would ask Larry or Ted.”

“You’d have believed them the first time,”



“ DR. PHIL CAME OVER AND PUT A KIND HAND ON THE BOY’S
SHOULDER.”

Dick shot back a little resentfully. “I *have* told the truth. I—I’ll go.”

“One moment, Dick. Look at me, lad. I do believe you now absolutely. I’m sorry I doubted you before. Forgive me.”

The tears sprang into Dick’s eyes.

“You’re—you’re white, that’s what. Thank ye, but I couldn’t stay. The others won’t believe me. What’s the use?”

“Tony and I believe in you, and Larry just put up a splendid defense for you. The only way you can prove it to the others is by living it down. Will you try?”

The boy nodded, and then, unable to say more, left the room.

Mrs. Holiday looked at her son in some exasperation.

“Philip, sometimes I think you are the most gullible person in the world.”

He laughed a little shortly.

“Am I? I rather think I have learned a few things about human nature in the ten years I’ve been trying to heal people’s minds and bodies. And one thing I think I’ve learned is to know when a boy or man is

speaking God's truth. Even suppose I am mistaken, which I don't believe I am, I'd no more turn that boy loose with this on his mind than I would commit murder. It would be a kind of murder. Please, Mother, not another word on the subject."

And when her son spoke in that tone his mother invariably yielded the point. She did now, though remaining unconvinced as to the boy's innocence. Dark days followed for poor Dick. No one spoke of the lost money, but not for a moment was it forgotten. Dr. Phil was as friendly as ever, more so, in fact, to make up for his first doubt. Tony was passionately loyal. The boys were frankly on the fence, and Dick knew and resented it. He and Larry continued the lessons, but the growing comradeship was nipped in the bud. Larry was kind, but there was a difference in his kindness now, and Dick felt it bitterly for he admired the other boy exceedingly. Had it not been for Tony's faith and his promise to Dr. Phil, he could hardly have kept at his post as long as he did.

But there came a day when the struggle was

too hard. Tony, going up-stairs to bed, found a note on her dressing-table; a note written in a queer, stiff, angular hand and grotesquely misspelled.

“DEAR TONY,”—So the note ran.—

“I have went. I couldnt stand it eny more. Leastwise, Im going soonas the chores is done. I’ll give this to Ted to give to you when its two late too stop me. He wunt no what is in the letter. You and your unkul have been orfull good to me. I shant fergit it. You mustunt worry bout me. I’ll be all write. i wunt do nuthing to spile the name you giv me. Thank you kinly fer that two. Tell your unkul I remember all he said bout them boys and Ill make him proud of me two some day if i can. Goodby,

“Yours obdiuntly,

“Richard Carson.”

“1. Tell Larry thank you two. He was good too me, even if he did think may be I did take the munny.

“2. Please dont feel two bad. D. C.”

For a moment Tony could hardly make head nor tail of the queer letter, and when she did make it out she was almost too much overcome to think what could be done. It nearly broke her tender heart to think the boy had been driven out from shelter by the doubts of those who should have befriended him and to realize how he must have been suffering in his silent dogged way. But how could he be brought back? Her first impulse was to run to her uncle, but she remembered with dismay that he had gone to Worcester to take a patient to the hospital and would not be back until the next day. The boys would not help her. They would say it was impossible to get hold of the runaway if he had been gone three or four hours, as he evidently had, in nobody knew what direction.

It did seem hopeless. Tony sat down on the bed, buried her face in her hands and thought. She felt sure Dick would not spend his few dollars on railway fare. Besides, there was no train out of the village that night. He would have to walk over to Winchendon or Gardner to get a train. The

word Gardner brought an inspiration. She sat up. She remembered Dick's saying once that a man in Gardner had been kind to him several years before and told the boy to come to him if the latter ever needed help.

"He was the only man I ever knew who treated me real white till I met your uncle," Dick had explained. "I'd go to him like a shot if I was in trouble. I was headed for him when I brought up here."

There was the key. Somewhere between the Hill and Gardner she felt sure Dick was to be found. But over three hours start! How could she ever overtake him?

Then a new inspiration came. She flew to the closet and fumbled over things until she found a khaki riding-suit and a pair of stout little boots. Into this costume she slipped, and a little later, when she was quite sure every one was in bed, and, it was to be hoped, fast asleep, she stole quietly down the stairs, boots in hand, out through the shed and into the barn. She saddled Tessy and, in a twinkling, a little figure, bestriding the black horse, flashed down the Hill into the darkness.

CHAPTER XXI

TONY VENTURES

TONY had ridden horseback almost as far back as she could remember, consequently she was not in the least afraid to be on big Tessy's back. Tessy was as gentle as a kitten, anyway, though fleet as the wind, and the little girl had been on her back more than once that summer. Still, it was a bit eerie to be riding alone through the night, and her heart beat fast, in tune to Tessy's thundering hoofs. It was already nearly eleven when she left the village and very few wayfarers were abroad. Save for a group of young merry-makers returning from a band concert, and an occasional "lover and his lass," enjoying the traditional pleasure of "buggy riding," she met no one, and overtook not a single foot traveler, though, more than once, scanning the road ahead she thought she discovered some form in the shadows.

Her first nervousness over, she began to enjoy herself thoroughly, for Tony loved adventure and was about as fearless as human nature could possibly be. Besides, she had a strong inner conviction that her wild ride would be successful, that somewhere along the road she would find Dick and make him see the folly of his flight. Almost any turn of the road now might reveal him she thought, and she redoubled the sharpness of her gaze. The moon was up now and the world lay almost as clear to view as in broad daylight.

Presently a new complication arose. She came to a fork of the road and reined Tessy in, in doubt as to which turn to take. In vain she tried to recollect which way she had gone when she came over the road a few weeks ago with her uncle. She waited, irresolute and dismayed, realizing that a slip now would spoil everything. There was no signboard, but suddenly a "cotton tail" flashed across the road just ahead and scampered to the right.

"Maybe you're a sign, Bunny," whispered Tony with a nervous little giggle, and turned

Tessy in the direction in which the rabbit had vanished. She had not advanced far on the new road before her heart gave a sudden joyous leap. Among the shadows she saw something move. As she approached nearer she recognized beyond doubt that a human form was huddled on the grass under some bushes.

“Dick! Oh, Dick!” she called without an instant’s hesitation. And then she caught her breath quickly in sudden shock of disappointment and consternation. The form had risen and a man’s evil face was leering at her out of the shadows. “Oh, excuse me,” she stammered, “I thought you were Dick.”

The man grinned and stepped out full into the moonlight.

“Wisht I was,” he said. “My name happens to be Marmaduke Percival DeLancey.”

Tony bit her lip. The man was evidently bent on pleasantries and she felt instinctively that they might not be agreeable ones. Yet she was determined to leave no stone unturned to find Dick.

“You haven’t seen anybody pass, have you?”

I am looking for a boy about fifteen years old, awfully thin and quite tall, with black hair."

"Oh, you are." And slowly and deliberately the man winked.

Tony's eyes sparkled and any faint remnant of fear vanished.

"Oh, you have!" she cried. "Please, is he very far ahead?"

"Hain't seen no such person on this 'ere road."

Tony's heart sank.

"Watcher want of him anyhow?" The man's tone was respectfully curious.

"I want to get him to come home with me. He ran away because—because somebody didn't believe in him and he couldn't stand it."

"Must a been mighty sensitive," grinned the man. He took a step nearer Tony, and his eyes, bright and inquisitive, peered up at her. "Didn't you believe in him?" he asked.

"I! Oh, yes. Of course I believe in him. That is why I'm here. Please tell me if you

have seen him.” All Tony’s heart was in her warm dark eyes as she made her plea.

He shuffled his feet a little uneasily in the dust and his shifty gaze fell.

“On the road we don’t give away a pal,” he said.

“Oh, then you have seen him?” cried Tony eagerly. “Is he on this road?”

“No, he ain’t,” curtly.

Tony drooped again.

“See here, Missy, I did fall in with a chap sorter answerin’ your description. We did a piece together and he told me something like what you’ve been a-tellin’ me. You get kinder confidential on the road, you know. He said somethin’ too, ’bout a little gal who’d been good to him, and give him her name, though he wouldn’t tell what ’twas. Was you the gal?”

“Yes,” said Tony.

“And you believe in him?”

“ ’Course I believe in him. Dick’s fine,” stoutly.

The man shrugged.

“Dick’s a fine fool I’m thinkin’ to be run-

nin' away from the likes of you. What'll you give me if I tell you where you'll find him?"

Tony hesitated.

"I haven't anything to give," she sighed. "I'll send you money if you will give me your address." She brightened at the idea.

He chuckled hoarsely.

"Uncle Sam'd have some job findin' my address," he muttered. "No use, Missy. I don't like promissory notes anyways. I like to handle the goods. Ain't you got nothin' better to offer?"

Tony shook her head distressed. Suddenly the moonlight fell on a ring she wore, one of her father's gifts, set with a small but very beautiful ruby—the stone he always said was like herself. She cared more for the ring than anything else she possessed. But there was Dick. And resolutely she slipped the ring from her finger and held it out. "Will this do?" she asked.

The man was very close now, so close she could see the greedy shine in his eyes as he snatched the ring. Then, unexpectedly, he

shook his head and put the ring back on her finger.

“I ain’t takin’ pretties from a gritty little gal like you,” he said. “Keep your ring. I don’t want it. Go back to the fork o’ the road, take tother turn and watch sharp. Your Dick fool can’t have gone more’n a mile, I reckon.”

“Oh, thank you,” cried Tony, aflame with happiness and gratitude. “You are awfully kind. I wish you would take the ring. I’d like to give it to you,” eagerly.

He shook his head again.

“I don’t need the ring, little Missy. But I would like—somethin’ else.” He paused in sudden embarrassment. “I had a little gal, onct. She’d have been along about your age I reckon. She used to put her arms around my neck sometimes and say ‘Daddy.’ I’d like—” He broke off with another shake of the head. “Better git on your way,” he advised shortly.

But, impulsively, Tony had leaned out of the saddle, and before he knew what was happening to him Marmaduke Percival DeLancey

felt a pair of warm arms around his neck and a soft little butterfly kiss fell on his cheek. "Daddy," whispered Tony. "That's for her."

In a moment Tessy was clattering down the road retracing the way to the fork. The man stared after the retreating figure, gallantly erect and fearless as a new Jeanne d'Arc, on the great black horse. He put up his hand and ran his finger over the spot where the butterfly kiss had dropped.

"That Dick chap's a darn lucky fool," he muttered.

Half an hour later, the "darned lucky fool" was startled by the hurrying beat of hoofs and rendered stupefied with amazement when he beheld Tony Holiday rising out of the moonlight.

"Dick! Oh, Dick! I'm so glad!" she cried, reining in Tessy for the third time since she started on her midnight journey.

A burst of long, eloquent, soul-relieving oaths trembled on Dick's tongue. None of the refinements of his newly acquired vocabu-

lary seemed at all adequate to the situation. But as the oaths manifestly could not be uttered, he simply dropped his jaw dazedly and said nothing.

“I’m here,” said Tony. “And you’ve got to go back with me, Dick. Oh, Dick, you made me feel just awful!” There was almost a sob in Tony’s voice. Dick could have heartily cursed himself at the moment. To make Tony cry! It was unthinkable—the unpardonable sin.

“I didn’t know—you’d care—like that,” he managed to stammer.

“Of course I cared. You ought to have known I would, and Uncle Phil, too,” incoherently. “How could you run away like that? It was awfully cowardly.”

Dick swallowed hard. Suddenly he saw things as Tony Holiday saw them. With bitter scorn of self and self-abasement he knew he had been a coward as Tony said. No matter how hard things were he should have stayed and “lived it down” as Dr. Holiday had told him.

“I reckon I was a coward,” he admitted

slowly. "Guess—I'd order give you back the name. I don't deserve it."

"Nonsense," snapped Tony. "You'll come back, name and all. You'd better do it quick, too, for not a soul knows where I am."

Dick gasped, realizing for the first time what it was Tony had done for his sake.

"You've come all this way alone just to git me," he said as if he could hardly believe the truth of his own words.

"Of course I did. There wasn't any need of a whole police force, was there? I most didn't find you though. I took the wrong turn and a nice man sent me back and told me where you were," she explained cheerfully.

"A nice man! Tony! Not that tramp!"

Dick's face went white in the moonlight. Wise beyond his years in life's darker lore, he knew, as Tony Holiday would perhaps never know, how reckless that midnight ride had been. It made him sick to think of the possibilities of danger she had run for him.

"Maybe he was a tramp, but he was nice for all that. He wouldn't take my ring. He only wanted—" She broke off, feeling in-

instinctively that Dick would not understand that kiss given for the other little girl who would have been about her own age. "He only wanted to help me find you," she substituted. "And I did," triumphantly.

"Should say you did. I'll go back, Tony. Only you will have to ride slow so I can look after you."

Tony laughed.

"I guess Tessy is big enough to carry us both. Can you ride?"

"Sure I can ride. I've ridden the ugliest horses we ever had in the 'Three Ring' bare-back."

"Jump up, then. You can sit on the saddle and hold me on, in front."

And so through the night the puzzled Tessy carried her double burden back to Holiday Hill and into her own barn.

"I'll give her a rub down and slip out through the trap door," said Dick. "I can get in to Jewetts' all right."

Tony nodded agreement as she bolted the barn door.

"Only don't run away," she warned.

“Not much I won’t—not after all the pains you’ve took—taken to get me back. I say, Tony, I—oh, hang it! I can’t say nothin’,” he burst out disgustedly.

“Don’t try. Let’s shake and keep still,” and Tony held out her hand.

Some long-forgotten vision of gallantry popped into the boy’s head and, dropping on one knee, he kissed the extended hand as reverently as any knight of old ever paid tribute to the chosen lady of his hand and heart.

A moment later Tony stole noiselessly into the house, just as dawn was beginning to yellow in the east. She made no delay about getting to bed and to sleep. And when the sun woke her five hours later she sat up, wondering if she had dreamed her midnight adventure. But there on the floor were the stout little boots and the khaki trousers, proof positive that there had been reality somewhere.

CHAPTER XXII

OF HUNCHES AND SO FORTH

WHEN Dr. Holiday came home Tony went straight to his office and told the whole story of her night ride from beginning to end. Only two things she omitted. She said nothing at all of that vicarious kiss on the road, which had been light as thistledown anyway and scarcely counted, and she forbore to mention also that other bit of knightly homage, delivered in the barn just as dawn was coming up over the hills. Those two memories she put daintily away among her womanly reticences. The rest it was Uncle Phil's right to know and judge as he thought fit.

“Now, please scold just as hard as you want to,” she begged when she finished her story. “Only please don't expect me to be sorry I went, because I'm not one single little bit sorry. I had a glorious ride and I got

Dick, so I couldn't very well be sorry, could I?" she appealed naïvely.

Her uncle shook his head with a humorous grimace.

"Behold what a devil and deep sea predicament you leave me in, as usual, you incorrigible young sinner," he said. "As an uncle and guardian I ought to deliver a fearsome lecture, stiff with threats and righteous wrath. As a mere human being, I'm filled with admiration of your pluck and luck." He grew grave. "No, we won't call it luck. You were in big hands, last night, child. I am inclined to think you acted on inspiration albeit a rash one. I am too thankful to have you safe and to have that poor lad back, to be very severe with you. So we'll waive the lecture this time. Your punishment is silence. Not an ounce of glory for this night rampage of yours. Understand?"

Tony nodded soberly. She did wish she could have told the boys. Already she had imagined herself just a little bit of a heroine in their eyes and now Uncle Phil's sentence squashed all that. Anyway, she would not

have wanted to give Dick away, so it was just as well she was under orders.

“If you see Dick, send him in to me,” added Dr. Phil.

“Uncle Phil, you aren’t going to be hard on him?” she implored, all eyes in a moment, Tony fashion.

“Not a bit of it. I just want to help straighten out a few things for him. Now, then, fly. I can hear the patients champing their bits in the other office.”

Later that day he had his interview with Dick, and the kind, serious talk did the lad much good. He went out of the office with a great many things “straightened out” for him. He also went out with a fairly clear conception of how men like Dr. Holiday view a “quitter,” and a new understanding that it isn’t what other people think of us so much as what we think of ourselves that really matters.

He took up his life where he had laid it down with quiet grit which won the doctor’s approval as well as Tony’s. They, too, alone knew what lay between that chore time and

the next dawn, and he was grateful for their forbearance. That he had been a selfish, unreasonable coward for a few hours, only those two good friends knew. He was spared the comment of the rest. Tony, who had hunches, as she called them, insisted that he would be cleared of the other accusation if he only waited long and patiently enough.

“Don’t see how,” he retorted gloomily one day when she was holding forth on the subject.

“Neither do I, but you will just the same. I feel it in my bones, and my bones are fearfully and wonderfully reliable. Didn’t I know I could find you that night and didn’t I do it?” she boasted.

“Thanks to the rabbit,” grinned Dick. “Where was your hunch that time?”

Tony frowned.

“The rabbit put me on the wrong track, silly thing, but there was a reason for that. I had to see my man. It was fate.”

“Oh,” said Dick dubiously. “Well, I hope your fate’ll get busy and show your grandmother I didn’t snitch her money.”

And, oddly enough, the very next day fate did "get busy."

Mrs. Holiday had asked Ted to see if he could dislodge a swallow's nest in the chimney. Armed with a broom, he knelt before the great fireplace and peered up into the throat of the chimney.

"Golly!" he ejaculated. "Come here, Tony."

Tony came and knelt beside her brother, likewise gazing upward. In one corner of the chimney hung a huge cobweb and in the web, neatly lodged, was a bit of dingy, green paper.

"Why-ee! Ted Holiday! I do believe that's Granny's bill! Give me the broom!" exclaimed Tony. And with one swift thrust of the broom Tony destroyed the web and sent the bit of dingy green paper fluttering down to the floor where she snatched it greedily. "It is! It is!" she cried excitedly. "Just wait until I show Granny!"

She flew out on the porch, followed by Ted, but to her disappointment found only Larry,

who listened to the story, however, with much interest.

“Gee! Then Dick didn’t take it?” he said as Tony finished.

“Of course he didn’t. You ought to be ashamed of yourself, Larry Holiday, to think he did.”

“I didn’t—at least—not more than half,” he added honestly. “Anyway, I’m mighty glad he didn’t, and I ask his pardon most humbly for the half.”

“You’d better do it in person,” flashed Tony. “You snubbed him that way.”

Larry’s shrug admitted the impeachment.

“I will,” he promised, and Tony was satisfied, for when Larry made a promise he kept it, as she very well knew.

“Wonder how the thing ever got up there,” puzzled Ted.

“Easy enough,” said Larry. “Wind blew it into the fireplace. Draught caught it up and cobweb held it. There you are in a nutshell. Wonder what Granny will say?”

“I’m going to find out mighty quick,” said Tony.

It must be confessed Mrs. Holiday was somewhat taken aback on being confronted by the lost money, together with Larry's perfectly plausible theory of the manner of its disappearance. Three pairs of keen, young eyes fixed on her face and all stamped unmistakably with a "You are in the wrong. What are you going to do about it?" was also disconcerting.

"I evidently misjudged the boy," she admitted after a moment. "Ted, take the money over to him and explain it is to make amends for the injustice I did him."

Tony's eyes shot sparks.

"That won't make amends," she blurted out.

Her grandmother raised her eyebrows.

"What will?" she inquired.

"Nothing, really," said Tony inexorably. "But the least you can do is to tell him yourself you were mistaken and that you are sorry."

For a moment the eyes of the two met with a steely flash as of crossed swords. Then Tony relented.

“Granny, dear, I don’t mean to be impertinent, but I’d love you so if you’d only do it nicely.”

Mrs. Holiday smiled grimly and left the room.

“Isn’t she mean?” exploded Tony.

“Wait,” said Larry.

And in a few moments Mrs. Holiday was back with a sheet of paper which she extended to Tony.

“Is that nice enough?” she asked dryly.

Tony snatched the paper and read eagerly. It was a formal but sufficiently gracious and perfectly sincere apology, ending with the expressed hope that Dick would accept the enclosed bill as token that he bore the giver no ill will for her misjudgment. It was signed in a beautiful, prim, old-fashioned script,

“Hester Winthrop Holiday.”

“That is lovely, Granny,” beamed Tony, all smiles. “Thank you ever so much. May I take it over to him, instead of Ted? He’s picking apples in the Jewetts’ orchard.”

Her grandmother nodded permission, and

Tony was off like the wind on her errand. Dick read the note in silence and wrinkled his nose somewhat disdainfully at the money.

“I’d rather not keep it,” he said. “I’m much obligated for the letter. It was rather decent of her to do it up so brown.”

Tony did not explain that the particular shade of “brownness” was chiefly of her bestowing.

“I think you ought to keep the money,” she objected. “It isn’t courteous not to.”

“ ’Tain’t mine. Why should I keep it? I didn’t want it in the first place, I don’t now.”

“That isn’t the point. Granny did the best she could to make up and you ought to accept it in the same spirit. When we were lots younger, Larry had a book I wanted once, and he wouldn’t give it up right away, so when he did I was so mad I flung it at him. Daddy said I was an Indian receiver and that was worse than being an Indian giver. I think you are being an Indian receiver.”

“Don’t even know what an Indian giver is,” grinned Dick. “But it’s evidently something you don’t like. If you want me to keep

the stuff to make your grandmother feel better, I'll do it."

"Do," approved Tony, and she departed in high satisfaction with herself and the world. Thus, early in her career, it will be observed, she had acquired the valuable habit of making people see things her way. Luckily, Tony's way was quite often, as in this case, the one which made the best of a situation. Anyway, neither Mrs. Holiday nor Dick regretted the necessary swallowing of pride when Tony rammed that article down their respective throats for the good of their respective souls.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE GREAT SECRET

“It isn’t that I care anything about their old secret,” said Phil, pensively chewing a piece of grass. “ ’Tisn’t very likely a parcel of girls would have a secret that would interest *us* much. What peeves me is their thinking we couldn’t find out what they’re up to if we cared to. They act so hanged superior about it.”

“I know,” agreed Ted. “ ’Course we could find out easy as easy if we half tried. I say, Phil, let’s. There’s nothing much doing. We might as well spend a few of our energies in that line.”

“I have put out a few feelers,” admitted Phil. “Not that I’ve really put my mind to it, so to speak.”

“Find out anything?”

“Not much. I pumped Mums and Jean a bit but they wouldn’t bite,” he mixed meta-

phors cheerfully. "But I do know they meet up in our attic, for I've tried the door and it's been locked ever since this great secret business has been on."

"Can't you get hold of the key?"

"Did once, when they weren't there. Wasn't a thing out of the ordinary so far as I could see. The white elephant is evidently veiled if he's there. I haven't been able even to put an eye on the key lately."

"Can't you get a look in when the girls are there?"

"Through a locked door? I'm no wizard."

"But isn't there a window?"

"Sure. Two of 'em. But my aeroplane isn't working, this week. Jerusalem! I've got it."

"What?"

"Skylight."

"They'd see you."

"See nothing, you ninny. I can get in through the skylight when they aren't there and conceal myself in some sequestered nook until they are there. See?"

"Glory, yes. Can you get up there? Roof

looks mighty steep," and Ted squinted meditatively in the direction of said roof.

"It is. But I can do it. Did once before on a dare. I can get on to the flat roof over the ell and crawl up to the skylight. The girls have it open so as to give the elephant plenty of air. It will be a cinch to drop through."

Accordingly, while the twins were doing the dinner dishes with an expeditiousness which betokened other plans, Phil executed his rather hazardous feat and successfully "dropped" through the skylight, landing with cat-like agility on his feet. He paused only a moment to wipe his perspiring countenance and then proceeded to conceal himself behind a pile of old trunks.

"Whew!" he groaned. "Talk about Purgatory! Hope it's no hotter than this."

A few moments later he was cheered by the sound of approaching footsteps, the click of a key and Charley's unmistakable giggle.

"Those boys are simply wild to know what we are doing," she announced. "Phil and Ted are busting with curiosity."

“Well, we won’t have to bust much longer,” thought the listener.

“Lock the door, Clare,” said Tony. “Have you got the fourth act ready, Charley?”

“Um-hm. I did it in my head last night and I came up here before breakfast and wrote it out so I wouldn’t forget.”

The speaker was evidently rummaging in the tall chest of drawers not two feet from where her brother sat curled into an uncomfortable knot, but with wide open ears. He heard the rustle of paper, followed by Charley’s voice, mumbling disconnected sentences.

“Sir Reginald enters—right center. Lady G.—no, that’s the third. Here ’tis. Listen.”

Charley cleared her throat impressively and Phil craned his neck to obey her last command.

“Lady Guendoline discovered at l. c. Lord Algernon enters r. w. That’s right wing. ‘Aha!’ he ejaculates. ‘At last she’s in me power.’ He laughs with grotesque, gloating glee.”

“O, Gee! I mean G’s,” giggled Clare.
“How did he do it? Give us a sample.”

“Do hush, Clare. You needn’t laugh. Bet you couldn’t of thought of all those nice words.”

“I think they are great,” admired Tony.
“You’re a wonder.”

“Ain’t she?” seconded Phil, under his breath. “The little human vocabulary miracle!”

“Lady G. rises and sweeps majestically out of the room. I mean off stage. Enter Dowager l. c.

“What’s a Dowager?” inquired Tony respectfully.

“Oh, a disagreeable old party with a monocle and a train a yard long. They always butt in at the wrong moment.”

“Suggests our esteemed aunt,” murmured Clare. “What does Dowager do?”

“Do stop interrupting. We’ll never get through the synopsis, let alone writing the act. She and Lord Algy concoct a nefabulous—no, I mean nefarious plot to persuade Lady G. that R. C.—”

“What’s that? Right Center?”

“Goodness no! Reginald Clancey, of course. To persuade Lady G. that R. C. has been faithless to her and is wooing the beautiful American heiress, Marguerite de Valois.”

“That isn’t an American name. I’ve heard it before somewhere anyway,” objected Clare.

“I don’t care if you have. I like it. I guess an American heiress could be a descendant of a French countess if she wants to. Listen, I’ve got a great speech for the D.”

“The D! So have I.” And Phil mopped his brow feelingly behind his suffocating barricade.

“Read it,” encouraged Tony. “I love your speeches.”

“So do I,” thought Phil. “I’ll use ’em later.”

“ ‘He is false, false as yon changeful moon. You must cast him from your heart as you would expel a—a—’ ”

“A what?” demanded Clare.

“I was going to say serpent but there is a better word. ‘As you would expel a sculpin.’ ”

“Sculpin’s a kind of fish. You mean that zodiacy beast, all claws. Scorpion.”

“That’s it. ‘As you would expel a scorpion,’ ” continued Charley.

“But does Guendoline believe all that tommy-rot? What does she say?”

“She says, ‘Aunt Anastasia, I love Reginald Clancey, and I will never believe him false until I behold his treachery with my own orbs!’ ”

“Oh, Charley, don’t say orbs. Sounds like a physical geography or something. Can’t she have plain eyes?”

“Orbs is more elegant,” dismissed Charley. “Am I writing this synopsis or are you, Clare Lambert? Enter Reginald and Miss de V., clad in a trailing gown of turquoise velvet—”

“What, both of ’em?” giggled Clare, the irrepressible.

“Don’t be silly. Reginald is kissing Marguerite’s hand as they enter.”

“Peripatetic osculation.” Thus the mental comment from behind the trunks.

“Whatever does he do such a fool thing as that for with his lady love on the spot?” protested Clare, the practical.

“He doesn’t see her. Nobody ever sees anybody on the stage even if they are right under the other fellow’s nose.”

“What’s he kissing Marguerite for if it’s Guendoline he wants to marry?” chimed in Tony.

“That’s the plot. You’ll know why in the fifth act. Do let me go on. G. gazes with speechless scorn at her lover and shrieks ‘False! False! Would I were dead at your feet! May God forgive you! I never can!’ ”

“Some speechlessness,” chuckled Phil.

“Then what?” cried Tony, carried away by the dramatic fervor of the scene.

“Curtain,” oracularly.

“Oh, give us the fifth. Let’s know the worst,” begged Clare.

“All right,” assented her twin, thoroughly enjoying her prestige as author-in-chief and

ready to prolong the privilege. "Things hump in the fifth act. They always do, you know. Scene one. Lord A. and Lady G. discovered tête-à-tête."

"What's that?"

"Oh, that means heads together—head to head—literally."

"Heavens! Are *they* going to get this kissing mania too? What was that?"

"What was what?"

"I heard a noise."

"What kind of a noise?"

"Like somebody sneezing or laughing or something."

"I didn't hear anything. Probably it was a mouse. If you were really interested, not poking fun all the time, you wouldn't hear things."

"All right. Fire ahead. I can't help my funny-bone though. Yours doesn't seem to operate when you are writing plays."

"Enter Miss de V. and Lionel Montrose."

"Help! Who's he? I never heard of him, did you, Tony?"

“Of course you didn’t. I made him up last night. There has to be somebody to marry Marguerite, doesn’t there? You’ve got to look ahead when you write plays. He’s an American, and has been secretly engaged to Marguerite a long time. Reggy had just found it out and was congratulating her when Guen saw him kiss her at the end of the fourth act.”

“Queer spot,” murmured Clare, her “funny-bone” still rampant.

“Why secretly?” interposed Tony.

“Because he was poor and her mother wouldn’t let her marry him. He’s just dug up a gold mine and come to London to claim his bride.”

“Great! What becomes of Lady G.? She doesn’t marry that ‘infernal scoundrel’ Algy, does she?”

“I’m coming to that. Scene two. Moonlight, roses, splashing fountain. Lady G. in white, with ropes of priceless pearls. She implores Reginald’s forgiveness for her base doubt of him and then cries, ‘Reginald, I love you but I cannot be your wife. I am be-

trothed to Lord Algernon.' He presses her to him in silence."

"Who? Algy?"

"Stupid! Reginald. Just at this moment, Lord Algy enters, l. w. Seeing G. in R.'s arms he falls into a vortex of rage. Don't ask me what vortex means, Clare. I don't exactly know myself, but I know it is the right word. In this vortex he falls to earth, stricken with apoplexy."

"Tactful customer," muttered Phil.

"Dowager rushes in with a telegram. She runs to R. with extended arms. 'My dear boy,' she cries, 'Your brother died last night. You are the earl. There is now no reason why you should not marry dearest Guendoline. The strawberry leaves will become her well.' "

"Why strawberry leaves?" queried Clare.

"Duchesses are always raving about their strawberry leaves. I think myself orange blossoms or something like that would be more romantic, but strawberries are the thing."

“How does it end?” urged Tony much impressed.

“Way they always do. Reginald sweeps Guendoline into his arms. Quick curtain. It goes up again in a minute and everybody comes out bowing and smiling, even poor old Algy.”

“Algy was bulgy with apoplexy the last we knew. Quick recovery,” thought Phil, nearly apoplectic himself with suppressed mirth.

“It is perfectly splendid,” Tony was saying. “Let’s write it out quick. I can’t wait to begin rehearsing.” And, indeed, this was literally true. The acting end was where she would shine and the part of the heroine had already been assigned to her.

“Let’s not do it until to-morrow,” said Clare. “This garret’s a perfect oven. You keep the key, Tony. Phil was nosing round for it yesterday and it will be safer in your possession.”

“Good idea,” approved Charley. “I don’t want to take any chances of Phil’s getting hold of the manuscript.”

As soon as the coast was clear, Phil crawled

out of his hiding-place, cramped and nearly roasted alive, but jubilant. He lost no time in searching the chest for its treasure and speedily discovered a notebook, on the initial page of which was written in Charley's clear round writing, "The Romance of Lady Guendoline" or "The Course of True Love."—A Drama in Five Acts.

"Now then, my fair ladies, I have you precisely where I want you," chuckled Phil. "I'll just purloin this to show the boys. Maybe we could learn a few choice bits just to show how we appreciate the literary efforts involved."

Very highly pleased with himself, he pocketed the notebook, and moving the chest of drawers under the skylight, climbed up on it and made his exit, the way he had come, "top center" as he explained later with a wink to the other boys.

CHAPTER XXIV

A STATE OF WAR

THE next hour was very profitably spent from Phil's viewpoint, in exploiting the "Drama" to Ted and Larry and Dick with sidelights on the delectable conversation he had overheard.

"What rotten stuff!" declared Larry. "What idiots girls are anyway! The idea of stewing away in a hot garret over such fool trash."

"They'll be hotter than the garret before we get through with them," appended Ted, in high glee of anticipation. "Tony'll have a fit when I serve the Lady Guendoline up to her."

"I think it's mean to plague the girls about it," interposed Dick unexpectedly.

"Don't be an idiot, Dick. I guess Phil didn't go to all that trouble just to let the girls down easy."

"Well, if you bother Tony and she feels

bad, I'll punch your head, that's all," asserted Dick with unusual pugnacity.

"Tony'll have to stand the gaff with the rest of 'em," put in Phil. "We found out their precious secret by fair means. It's ours now, and we're bound to get some fun out of it."

"I don't think it was fair means. I call it mighty sneaky."

Phil's fist doubled instinctively.

"I've a good mind to make you take that back," he said shortly. "If you hadn't been sick I would. 'By. I'm going home."

And as Phil crossed the street he couldn't help wondering if Dick were right, and if what he had done hadn't been quite fair. Anyway it was done, and he didn't propose to be taught any lessons in morals by an ex-circus performer. Neither did he intend to be cheated out of his hard-earned triumph. He lay low for the rest of that day, however, and awaited the outcome of events. When the girls discovered their loss it would be time enough to act.

The next morning the collaborators retired



" SHE WHIRLED AROUND WITH SCARLET CHEEKS AND ANGRY EYES."

as soon as possible to work on the "text" as Charley called it. It was rather a shock to see the chest in its unaccustomed location and Charley made one dive into the drawer where she had placed the notebook yesterday. In a moment she whirled around with scarlet cheeks and angry eyes.

"I knew it! It's gone, and Phil Lambert's got it! I thought something was up last night when he said something about 'nefarious plots.' Oh, it's mean!" And, overcome by her conflicting emotions, Charley plumped down on a rag bag and surveyed the others tragically.

"He must have come in and out by the skylight. Did you ever?" gasped Clare. "How do you suppose he ever dared to do it?"

"Don't know and don't care. I wish he'd fallen off the roof. Oh, no, of course I don't wish that, but I'd like him to be paid up somehow, and I'll do it, too. Phil Lambert had better look out, that's all." And Charley marched out of the room and down the stairs, followed more slowly by Clare and Tony. Nobody thought of locking the door

this time. The treasure had been rifled. There was nothing left to guard.

“It’s worse for Charley, because it was more hers. I never saw her so upset about anything. She’ll never forgive Phil if he teases; and, of course, he will.”

“They’d better keep still to me,” said Tony with a toss of her head. “I’ll fix Ted if he tries to be smarty. Larry won’t be mean. He never is.”

“Well, Phil will be just awful,” groaned Clare. “The play was ever so silly in spots and he’ll rub in every one of the spots. I just know he will. ’Twouldn’t be human nature not to.”

In the meantime Charley had plunged ahead stormily into the living-room and poured forth a volley of wrathful vocabulary upon her brother’s head. Mrs. Lambert and Jean, who had no idea what it was all about, listened, somewhat aghast, at the tirade, but Phil grinned with provoking good humor.

“‘False! False! False! Would I were dead at your feet! May God forgive you! I never can,’ ” he quoted dramatically.

“Phil Lambert, don’t you dare say another word!” Charley stamped her foot fiercely in emphasis of her command.

“ ‘Reginald, I love you but I cannot be your wife,’ ” Phil raved on maliciously, and was rewarded by a stinging blow straight in the face.

“Oh, come now, Charley! Don’t be a fool,” he expostulated, getting angry in his own turn.

“Philip! Charley!” Mrs. Lambert thought it time to interfere. “Charley, sit down and keep quiet for five minutes. When you can control yourself sufficiently you may explain what all this tempest is about.”

“I’ll tell you, Mums,” offered Phil.

“No, we will wait for Charley.”

“Phil Lambert, you’re the meanest!” Thus Clare hurled her bomb from the doorway where she appeared with Tony.

Phil longed to deliver another moving quotation, but a sidelong glance at his mother’s grave face counseled discretion and he forbore.

“Can’t you take a joke, Twinnie?” he asked instead.

“I don’t know whether I can or not. It depends.”

“I don’t think it was a very honorable kind of joke,” put in Tony severely.

Phil flushed at that. He didn’t particularly like Tony’s siding with Dick in that somewhat derogatory point of view.

By this time Charley, who had been making heroic efforts to get command of herself, looked up and managed to speak almost steadily, though with her eyes still full of angry tears.

“Phil stole my play and read it,” she summed up her brother’s arraignment.

“It was only a joke, Mums. I’ll give it back. But they made such a fuss over their secret that Ted and I were just bound to get even. I climbed in through the skylight and hid yesterday while they were doping it out, and after they went I swiped it for fun.”

“You were in the attic yesterday and heard everything we said. I knew that wasn’t a

mouse I heard. Why, Phil Lambert, I think that was just horrid of you!"

Charley, huddled in a miserable heap on the couch, could find nothing worse to say than she had already said and added nothing to her twin's reproach. Tony's eyes flashed fine scorn.

"I hate eavesdroppers," she announced.

Phil bit his lip but made up his mind to pass the remark off with a joke.

"I was only a *roof* dropper as it happens. I say, I feel as if I had gotten into a nest of hornets. Hasn't any of you the sense to recognize a joke when you see one? If it had been the other way round you would all have been as proud as peacocks."

"That's so," Clare suddenly capitulated. "Shake, Phil. I'm over my mad."

"You're a trump, Clare," and Phil squeezed the proffered hand with a grip which made its recipient wince.

But Tony turned on her heel and left the room with her head in the air, and Charley remained silent, sulky, and woe begone in the corner.

“Here’s your precious drama. I don’t want it,” said Phil, producing the manuscript. Charley snatched it from his hands and tearing it in pieces threw it back in his face, after which expression of her feelings she ran out of the room.

“Well, upon my word! Talk about temper!” And Phil stooped with a shrug to pick up the fragments of the unfortunate “Course of True Love.”

Mrs. Lambert sewed on in silence which Phil suspected was not very approving. When he deposited the last scrap of paper in the waste basket he came over and stood in front of her.

“Mums.”

“Yes, Philip,” she answered, not looking up from her work.

“Please, don’t be so still. I’d rather you’d say something. I hate having silence shrieked at me.”

She did look up then with a faint quizzical twinkle in her eyes, though her lips were still grave.

“What do you expect me to say? That I

enjoy having you tease Charley until she goes off on a tantrum like that? Or that I particularly admire your roof-dropping exploit, especially as you know perfectly well you would have been forbidden to take such a dangerous climb if I had known?"

"No, I suppose not," sighed her son gloomily. "Nobody ever understands a fellow. I suppose you think it's up to me to make up with Charley."

"I certainly do. A joke which hurts somebody else isn't much of a joke, Phil."

"I didn't know she was going to feel like that about it."

His mother smiled slightly as she bent over to pick up another stocking to darn.

"At any rate, you know how she feels about it now," she said quietly.

And that was all the satisfaction Phil was able to extract from that quarter, which, it must be admitted, was not a very large amount.

The wake of Lady Guendoline's romance continued to make trouble it seemed. Later that afternoon, Dr. Phil was startled by

Tony's sudden appearance in the office and listened to her excited statement that Ted and Dick were "fighting like everything and would he please come and stop them?" He rose at once and followed Tony's lead to the back yard, where, indeed, Ted and Dick were "fighting like everything."

The battle was evidently a close one. Dick's recent illness had left him weak of muscle and his three years' seniority and superior size and pugilistic skill scarcely offset this disability, for Ted was quick and strong and furiously angry into the bargain. As neither combatant appeared to hear, or, at least to heed, the command to cease hostilities, Dr. Phil walked in between them and with a sweep of his strong right arm separated the belligerents.

"Ted! Dick! I'm surprised at you. What is this all about?"

"He struck me first," said Ted, bristling like a turkey cock. "I guess I won't stand that from anybody."

"He was pesterin' Tony," put in Dick, aggressively. "I warned him I wouldn't stand

for it. He only got what was comin' to him," darkly.

"Oh!" Dr. Phil looked moderately enlightened. "Tony, come here. I doubt if either of these doughty warriors is cool enough to explain things very clearly. Suppose you do it."

"Why, Uncle Phil, it's only that Ted has been teasing me all day about a play we girls have been writing and I got so mad I finally cried and Dick came up just then and struck Ted. I didn't mean them to fight. I'm sorry I cried. It was silly of me."

"So that is it." Then Uncle Phil said: "Teddy, lad, I don't know but I agree with Dick that you got pretty much what was coming to you, and being a Holiday, I don't expect you to take a blow without hitting back, either. I rather think you are quits. How about it? Dick has vindicated his chivalry and Ted his honor, so suppose you shake hands like gentlemen and call it off."

Dick, like the immortal Barkis, professed himself as being "willin'." Ted sulked for

a minute, then grinned sheepishly and held out his hand.

“Say, but you’re some scrapper,” he acknowledged.

Dr. Phil nodded approval.

“All right then. Five minutes only until supper. Better remove the stains of battle.”

And the erstwhile foes parted amicably with no ill will on either side as became true knights.

“Queer cattle, boys!” murmured Dr. Phil to himself with a shake of his head. “What next, I wonder?”

CHAPTER XXV

THE TEST

LARRY, stretched lazily on the couch in the up-stairs den, threw down his book with a yawn.

“Funny,” he thought. “Seems as if I smelled smoke.”

He rose and went out into the hall where the odor was even more unmistakable and seemed to come, oddly enough, from the garret instead of from the kitchen. Bent on investigation, he mounted the stairs to the third story and flung open the attic door. A stinging, blinding blast of hot smoke smote him in the face and he backed out hastily.

“Jiminy! There’s a fire sure enough! Wonder if Uncle Phil’s at home!”

He peered cautiously in again through the thick smoke and saw that a pile of rag bags was blazing merrily and that a leaping line

of flame was making its way across the floor, where it had already caught some thin garments hanging under the sloping eaves. The mischief was well under way. Quick action was imperative. Larry started to rush down-stairs to cry for help and get water when he was startled to hear a low but perfectly distinct groan from somewhere beyond that barricade of flame and smoke.

For a moment everything went black before him. Then, seizing his handkerchief, he tied it around his mouth, and picking up a heavy winter overcoat, which hung near, he wrapped himself in it, and with white face and grim set lips he dove straight into the fire. The hot breath scorched his face, and one angry, scarlet tongue darted, snakelike, toward his hand, leaving a smarting ache where it touched, but otherwise he came through unscathed.

Just beyond, hardly three feet from the flames, lay his grandmother with ghastly pale face and an ugly purple bruise upon her forehead. Her eyes, however, were wide open, looking very black and strange with the hor-

ror in them. In a second the boy was beside her.

“Granny, are you all right?”

She nodded.

“Shut—window,” she whispered thickly.

Larry obeyed promptly, though wondering why she wanted the window closed. The smoke was getting uncomfortably thick and the breath of fresh air from the window was grateful as it struck his face. Then it occurred to him that that very blast of fresh air was doubtless doing damage, fanning the flames to greater height, which accounted for his grandmother’s order. He turned quickly for the next task, whatever it was.

“Extinguisher — shelf — corner.” The words came out with difficulty but the speaker made her meaning clear by a pointed finger.

Larry nodded. He remembered now, having seen a patent chemical extinguisher somewhere in the garret. What a fool he had been not to recollect it before! He slipped the protecting handkerchief back over his mouth to keep out the fumes and plunged back into the flames which were more vehement than

ever now. One sleeve of the great coat caught fire as he passed through and a red flash ran up the rough surface of the material but he managed to extinguish it with the other arm, though he burned his hand rather badly in so doing.

He found the extinguisher, and after that it was the work of a few moments only to fight the fire to the finish. What the chemical didn't accomplish he was able to do himself by means of an old piece of carpeting. This done he dashed back to his grandmother and saw with dismay that her eyes were closed, that she had either been overcome by the smoke, or had fainted. He ran to the stairs shouting "Tony" at the top of his lungs as he went. To his relief he heard the front door slam and saw Tony come flying in from the porch.

"Get Uncle Phil. If he isn't home, telephone for another doctor and get Mrs. Lambert, quick. Granny's hurt—in the attic."

Waiting only to be sure she understood, he rushed to the bathroom for water which he was soon dashing in his grandmother's white

face. In a moment the black eyes opened with such a look of love and gratitude in them that he had to swallow hard to keep back the lump which rose in his throat. He hadn't always felt very friendly to his grandmother, but at the moment he was conscious of a warm wave of affection welling in her direction. After all, she was "Granny" and very dear. Following a sudden impulse, he bent down and bestowed a kiss on her forehead, an unusual demonstration on the part of the reserved lad that brought an even softer expression into the dark, wide open eyes.

And then, Dr. Phil, with Tony close behind, rushed in. There was no time for any explanations. The doctor gave one quick look at his mother, and then proceeded with Larry's help to carry her down-stairs to her own room. By this time, Mrs. Lambert, also, arrived on the scene, and together they got the sufferer into bed.

A severe shock to her nervous system, a bad bruise and a broken arm seemed to be the sum of the damage. Though the pain

was severe she remained perfectly conscious while her arm was being set and even found strength to tell what had happened. She had gone to the garret to get something and had lit a candle to use in the dim recesses of the wardrobe. Tripping over a roll of carpeting, she had fallen heavily, hitting her head so sharply that she must have become unconscious for a moment. When she recovered, the fire was already started, and she realized that her arm was broken and that she was almost powerless to move, and utterly unable either to put out the fire or to save herself. She had tried to call for help but the futility of trying to make herself heard through the closed door had discouraged her weakened will so she had simply lain still, watching those sinister flames rise higher and higher and creep nearer and nearer.

“When Larry came, I had given up all hope. He ran straight through the fire to me and saved my life as surely as anything is sure in this world.” Mrs. Holiday’s voice broke a little for the first time as she made this statement, and her son’s face quivered

with emotion. As for Tony, she flew out of the room, with shining eyes, to find her brother who had slipped quietly away some moments before.

She found him in the bathroom, prosaically engaged in applying vaseline to his burns.

“Why, Larry! You were dreadfully burned, and you never said a word! Your face is all blisters and your hands— Oh, Larry! You helped Uncle Phil just as if you hadn’t been hurt a bit. How could you?”

“I didn’t think much about anything with Granny like that.”

“But don’t they hurt awfully now?”

“Not exactly comfortable,” admitted Larry. “Nothing to make a fuss over, though.”

“Well, you are a sure enough hero, Larry Holiday, and I’m just as proud of you as I can be.”

“So say we all of us,” said Dr. Phil, appearing in the doorway. “Go down to my office, Larry, where I can dress those burns of yours properly.”

And when the medical ministrations were

finished, Dr. Phil put both hands on his nephew's shoulders and looked straight down into the fine gray eyes.

"Don't ever tell me again that Larry Holiday is a coward. For sheer grit and wit, I don't need to hear of anything better. I'm proud of you, Larry. And we all owe you more than we can possibly say. I suppose I don't need to tell you that you undoubtedly saved Granny's life."

"I guess it was a very close shave," acknowledged Larry. "I'm glad I could. But, Uncle Phil, I don't deserve quite so much praise. I was afraid, awfully afraid for a moment. It just seemed as if I couldn't deliberately go into that fire. And then I knew it was my job and I just shut my teeth and did it."

"To know your job and do it, no matter what happens. That's all there is to courage, Larry."

"Maybe. Anyway, I can't help being glad you see it that way. And, Uncle Phil, the queer part of it is, it doesn't seem as if I ever should be afraid again. I wasn't at all

afraid the second time I went through the fire. It was as if something had been burned out of me the first time.”

“I believe something of the sort did happen, Larry. You had been doubting yourself so long that the moment you found you could act with courage you restored your faith in yourself. The morbid dread was burned away, leaving you fearless. I don’t believe you ever will be afraid again in the same way. That ghost is laid.”

“I hope so,” fervently.

Larry’s burns proved to be not very serious and, indeed, were practically healed in a week. His grandmother did not fare so well. The fall and the severe nervous shock kept her in bed for many days. The children did their faithful best to be quiet and considerate and helpful and the invalid herself was strangely gentle and softened.

“She’s really beginning to look for the good in us, ’stead of always being on the lookout for the bad,” Tony confided to her uncle.

Indeed it would have been a very blind per-

son who could have failed to be touched by Tony's faithful attendance. The child might have counted by the thousands the steps she took each day in her grandmother's service and all with the sweetest willingness in the world.

It was Tony whose dainty fingers arranged the sickroom trays and kept fresh flowers on the stand by the bed. It was Tony who bathed Granny's head when it ached and read aloud to her by the hour from long dull books. It was Tony who flitted in and out softly with bits of gay Hill gossip and eager offers of services. In fact, it became almost a joke in the household that nobody could do anything quite right except Tony. Her grandmother's eyes followed her wistfully sometimes, and once Tony heard Mrs. Holiday tell her son she didn't see how she could ever get along without the child when she went away in the fall to boarding school.

That set Tony to thinking, and the result of her thinking was a long, fat letter to Daddy which was answered, in due time, by another equally long and fat. And the sequel to the

two long, fat letters was a conference with Uncle Phil.

“Uncle Phil, I’ve decided not to go away to school but to stay and go to High School here with the boys. Daddy approves, if you do.”

Dr. Phil surveyed the speaker.

“Why?” he asked.

“Because,” said Tony and stopped. “There’ll be time enough to go away to school later,” she added casually.

“When do we get to the why?”

Tony laughed and shook her head at the question.

“You are too wise, Uncle Phil. The real reason is—Granny.”

“I thought as much.”

“Granny’s loving me quite a lot these days, and I love to be loved.”

He did not speak, guessing there was more to follow.

“Granny won’t be well and strong again for some time to come, will she?”

“I’m afraid not, Tony.”

“Well, that’s it, too. Granny’s needing

me quite a bit, too, it seems to me. And I like to be needed."

"The eternal feminine," smiled her uncle, but his eyes were tender. He understood perfectly that Tony was doing a generous and very sweet thing. "Bless you, little girl," he added. "I believe you will never be sorry."

"It isn't only Granny, either," went on Tony. "Daddy thinks it's good for Ted and Larry to have me with them and that it's good for me to have them. He doesn't care very much for all-girls' schools, though he said I might go if I really wanted to. And I do want to, Uncle Phil. One part of me wants to go dreadfully, and it's no use pretending it doesn't. But the other part of me—the bigger part—wants to stay here, if you'll let me."

The decision brought such evident relief and pleasure to Mrs. Holiday that Tony was nearly overcome.

"Why, Uncle Phil, I never had any idea she cared so much," she confessed. "And I guess she didn't know I cared so much,

either. Fact is, I didn't know it myself. But Granny knows now what I'm like inside and I know what she's like inside and if our outsides kind of scratch each other sometimes, as they probably will, it won't matter so awfully."

CHAPTER XXVI

THE FEUD

“SOMEBODY must have bought the bungalow,” announced Clare. “The ‘To Let’ sign is gone.”

The bungalow was the empty house at the foot of the Hill which was the property of some city people who had already tired of coming to the country lakeside for their summer holidays and had offered the place for sale some months ago.

“Maybe Dr. Phil’s bought it,” suggested Charley. “I saw him coming out of there yesterday.”

“What would he want of a house?” asked Clare.

“Don’t know. Maybe to carry out some of his pet schemes of bringing girls up from the city for cheap vacations. Do you know, Mother?”

Mrs. Lambert shook her head. If she pos-

sessed any theories on the subject she did not choose to air them at the present.

“Goodness me! Clare, you most made me forget what I was going to say. I’ve got a brand new, perfectly, swell elegant scheme.”

“Sit still, me beating heart! Expound.”

“We are going to give a gorgeous, bang-up banquet with menu cards and speeches and magnificent eats and—and everything,” Charley finished inclusively.

“Who’s going to cook the magnificent eats and make the speeches?”

“We, us, ourselves. Don’t you think it’ll be great?”

“Sure. I’m prepared for anything.”

“Isn’t it a fine idea, Mums? Jean?” demanded Charley further, of the assembled company.

“Fine,” agreed her mother heartily. “Why not make it a Round Table banquet?”

“I was going to say why don’t you make it a party for Miss Marjorie? Her birthday’s next Wednesday and she’s going away very soon after that.” This from Jean with interested face.

“We can make it both. Can’t we, Charley?” asked Clare eagerly. “We can have a Round Table banquet in honor of Miss Marjorie.”

“All right—all but one thing. You may as well all understand that I shan’t invite Phil Lambert to my banquet, nor Ted Holiday, either, for that matter. I’ve been waiting for a chance to pay Phil back good and hard and now I’ve got it. I guess they’ll be sorry when they know what we are going to have to eat.”

Mrs. Lambert opened her mouth to speak then shut it again, leaving the words unspoken. It was her policy to let the children work out their own weal and woe unless arbitration became an absolute necessity. Jean was less cautious.

“Miss Marjorie wouldn’t like that at all,” she objected.

“I can’t help it. It’s my party most ’cause I thought of it, and if I’ve got to ask Phil Lambert I just won’t have it. That’s flat.”

“Come on and find Tony and let’s talk it over,” suggested Clare tactfully. She knew

her twin's bark was worse than her bite and thought the latter would change her mind when the time came. The main thing was to get the "Banquet" on an established basis.

For a week the atmosphere was surcharged with this new excitement very much as the previous one had been heavy with the "Drama." There was usually some absorbing project or other afoot on the Hill. The youngsters were pretty apt to be going "from one severe gog into another." The plans for the great feast grew and multiplied amazingly. Mrs. Holiday, interested and amused by Tony's enthusiastic reports of the affair, offered the use of her dining-room, with all the necessary accompaniment of silver and china and glass and linen, a surprising piece of generosity on her part which nearly took the girls' breath away and fired their zeal to make the dinner a truly "epoch-making event" as Charley magnificently described it.

Open to all kinds of suggestions along other lines, the inventor of the great banquet scheme remained obdurate on the one rather critical point. Phil and Ted were to be pun-

ished, once and for all, by their enforced absence from the felicity of the "epoch-making event." They should not and could not be invited if Charley were to remain the sovereign commander of this new "gog," and it would have been a bold person, indeed, who would have dared to hint at her abdication from that post. Charley was a born general, and without her there would have been no feast indeed.

The affair was by no means to be what Larry called a "hen party," however. Larry and Dick were both honored with formal invitations, the former out of consideration of his forbearance on the subject of "Lady G." and also for his recent distinguished services rendered; the latter, as a reward for his efficient championage of Tony's cause in the face of the enemy. At Mrs. Lambert's suggestion, Dr. Phil, who was always doing something nice for what Clare had christened the "Hillocks," was likewise invited. Only the two arch-sinners were to be barred from attendance, a fact which made their punishment doubly effective in Charley's shrewd eyes.

“Well, I call it darned cool,” was Phil’s verdict when all the invitations were officially “out” and it became only too apparent that no more were forthcoming.

“You mean it makes you darned hot,” corrected Larry slyly, not averse to “rubbing in” his superior prestige as an invited guest.

“After all we’ve done for those girls this summer, too,” pursued Phil, preferring to ignore the gibe.

“Especially your thoughtful dramatic criticism of the ‘Romance of Lady Guendoline,’ ” grinned Larry.

“You needn’t feel so smart over getting a bid to the old thing. I’ll bet they’ll hear from us before they are through with their precious tea party,” predicted Ted darkly. “Come on for a swim, Phil.” And he winked significantly, thereby conveying his desire to confer with his fellow victim apart.

And later, when the boys came up the Hill again, after their swim, there was something sinister to the twins’ gaze in the inappropriate cheerfulness, the smug, mysterious air of self-approbation worn by the two.

“I’ll bet Phil Lambert has something up his sleeve,” said Clare that night as the girls went to bed. “You’d better ask him to the party in self-defense.”

“I’ll do nothing of the kind. If Phil Lambert does anything to spoil my banquet, I’ll—I’ll— Oh, I don’t know what I’ll do to him, but it will be something dreadful.”

Secretly, however, her brother’s diabolic good humor and tranquillity, in the face of his exclusion from the feast, filled Charley with consternation. So much so, in fact, that she went the very rare length of appealing to her mother on the subject.

“I just know he’s going to do something mean, Mums. Won’t you please stop him?” she begged.

“You have it in your own power to do that, Charley.”

“I!”

“You have only to invite him to your banquet. Coals of fire are about the hottest punishment you can inflict. Haven’t you exacted enough penalty from Phil, by this time, anyway?”

“No, I haven’t. And I wouldn’t invite him now, anyway. He’d think I did it because I was afraid of him. No, siree, bob!” And Charley set her mouth very firmly and departed, concluding that there was no assistance to be gained from this source.

Mrs. Lambert was, however, a little better than she promised. That evening she and Phil happened to be alone in the living-room and he looked up from his reading to find her gaze fixed on him.

“What is it, Mums? You look as if you were trying to work out a puzzle.”

“I am. I was wondering if you thought it paid.”

“What?” Phil returned rather ostentatiously to his magazine.

“This feud with Charley.”

“There isn’t any feud, or if there is, it’s all on her side. I haven’t any grouch. Besides, she’s had her innings. We’re quits.”

“And you propose to remain quits?”

Phil fluttered the leaves of the magazine and bent to examine a photograph of a new

kind of submarine. In his mind was a vision of some sleek, long-tailed, pink-eyed white rats, emerging from a covered dish, of possible overturning of viands, of certain screaming and scattering of damsels. The mice were real and no vision merely. He knew just where he could lay hands on them when the time came. He and Ted had seen to that. The preparedness campaign was complete. But naturally one does not reveal such visions to one's mother. Hence the absorption in the submarine.

"I wouldn't do it, Son. It won't pay." Mrs. Lambert spoke quite as if he had spoken out loud.

"What?" he asked resentfully. "See here, Mother. You're not a bit fair. You're blaming me for things I haven't done and you don't even know I'm going to do."

"Can you assure me honestly that you are not planning to do something else to annoy and trouble the girls?"

Phil was silent, self-convicted by his silence and he knew it.

"Does all this Round Table talk mean so

little to you? Are you willing to be the one to spoil all it has stood for?"

Phil wriggled uneasily.

"I'm not spoiling it," he retorted. "Charley is."

"That is not a very knight-like speech, Son. The offense was yours in the first place. Have you made any honest effort to restore peace?"

Phil shook his head.

"No, I haven't, and, what's more, I'm not going to. She'd think I was doing it just to get a bid."

Mrs. Lambert couldn't help smiling, remembering how closely Charley's argument resembled Philip's.

"Why don't you tell me out and out to apologize to Charley and order me to keep hands off her old tea party?" Phil's tone was aggressive and not very courteous. But underneath he was hoping, just a little, that this was precisely what she would do. At least, it would let him out from a situation of which he was really a bit tired.

"Because you happen to be old enough to

do your own thinking, Philip, and quite capable of deciding for yourself what is worth while and what isn't," his mother replied quietly. "Look at me, Son."

Reluctantly Phil obeyed.

"I don't believe you are quite as bad as you are trying to make yourself out. In fact, I am sure that I can trust you to do the right thing whatever you decide that is. Now am I unfair, dear?"

"Oh, Mums! I ought not to have said that," said Phil penitently. "You're a dear, and I've been a grumpy bear. I'm sorry. But I do most wish you'd issue orders. Otherwise, I'm not sure I'll ever have the heart to give up my 'nefarious plot,'" he quoted with a laugh but with a serious plea underneath.

She shook her head decidedly at that.

"Don't shirk, little boy," she smiled. "I have no intentions of doing your thinking for you."

In the meantime, Charley, who had run over to consult Miss Marjorie about some detail of the great feast which was to come off

the next evening, had been confronted by the same hard-to-answer question, "Are you going to be the one to break up the Round Table?"

"I'm not breaking it up, Miss Marjorie," protested the girl. "The Round Table's all right only Phil doesn't deserve to be in it because he was horrid and dishonorable and unkind about the play and I know he's planning to do something else just as mean to spoil the banquet."

"Charley, did you ever think that the Round Table wasn't a piece of furniture, or even a group of men? It was a spirit, and when the spirit was gone the Round Table was no more."

Charley poked a grass blade with the toe of her slipper and her eyes were troubled but she shook her head obstinately.

"I can't help it, Miss Marjorie. I'm sorry if you think I've spoiled the Round Table, but there's something inside me that just won't let me give in about this."

"I am sorry, too, Charley." Miss Marjorie was silent a moment, watching a firefly

flit past in the darkness. "Are you still angry with Phil?" she asked after a pause.

Charley looked up, surprised.

"Why, of course I'm still angry!" she exclaimed, and then hung her head, for suddenly, down in her heart, had sprung up a queer, horrid doubt. Was she still angry? Or was it just that she was cherishing hurt vanity and stiff-necked pride and a mean little grudge?

"I wonder?" smiled Miss Marjorie as if she guessed the existence of the queer horrid doubt. "Think it over, Charley, and see if it isn't that you've fallen in love with the quarrel until you've almost forgotten the original cause."

"Why, Miss Marjorie, I'm not a bit in love with the quarrel," reproachfully. "Things have been just horrid all the week. Even the banquet's no fun, because everybody thinks I ought to give in and ask Phil and Ted. Even Clare thinks so, though she doesn't say it. I guess it's no joke to be on the other side of the fence from your twin when you're used to thinking just alike about everything."

Everything's spoiled," she summed up dismally.

"Which is pretty much what I've been saying to you. Everything's spoiled because the spirit of the Round Table has vanished. You could straighten it all out in a twinkling, little Knightess, if you would, by making up with Phil."

"Oh dear. That's what Mother said," wailed Charley. "Nobody understands."

And she turned and fled to hide the tears which would come.

CHAPTER XXVII

PREPARATIONS

ALL the next day excitement ran high on the Hill. From early morning to mid-afternoon preparations went on almost uninterruptedly. The menu cards Jean had already finished the day before and they lay in a pile in a drawer of Mrs. Lambert's desk, carefully concealed, for Charley had a morbid dread of leaving anything where it could fall into Phil's hands. The cards were folders of cream white paper with a dainty clover design on the outer sheet, for this flower with its fragrant little pink and white blossom and its triple leaf had been chosen as the symbol of the order of the Round Table.

"It is so cheerful and friendly and everyday," Miss Marjorie had said. "We won't even take the four-leaf. We aren't looking for luck but just good fellowship."

So here was the clover on the menu cards,

and down in one corner, in quaint Old English print done in gold letters, was the German motto, "Ich Dien," the "I serve," with which Larry had "taken a shot at himself" once. On the first page of the open folder was the menu itself, the result of much deliberation and discussion on the part of the young cooks. At the top was the quotation from "Macbeth":

"At first
And last a hearty welcome."

Next followed the bill of fare itself, which read as follows:

Cream of Celery Soup.	
Brook Trout—à la Dick and Larry.	
Roast Chicken—Holidayish.	
Green Peas.	Mashed Potatoes.
Creamed Asparagus.	
Mother Lambert Rolls.	
Currant Jelly—à la Jewett.	
Cake.	Caramel Mousse.
Grape Juice Punch.	

The girls had not intended to have the fish course, but Dick and Larry, in their zeal to repay the favor of their invitation, had offered to provide the trout and had started

bright and early before breakfast for the promised delicacy. On the strength of these prospects Jean had been instructed to add the second item, and every one concerned was relieved when the fishermen returned with the spotted beauties fresh from the woods, actually in their possession. Otherwise the second item would have been necessarily, “*officially*” omitted from the program as Clare announced, with a mischievous accent on the second syllable. Credit was likewise given to Mrs. Holiday for the chicken she had provided, and which Mary Anne Eliza had promised to roast for the occasion in her own inimitable manner. The “Mother Lambert Rolls” and the “Currant Jelly, à la Jewett” were also contributions, but the rest of the bill of fare was to be exclusively the work of the young “Round Table Ladies.”

The second page of the card announced the toasts and read thus:

Toast Master Sir Philip Holiday

“A verray parfit gentil knight”

The Ladies Sir Laurence Holiday

“Drink to me only with thine eyes”

The Round Table Lady Jean Lambert

“I drink to the general joy of the whole table”

The Knights Lady Marjorie Ericson

“The good stars met in your horoscope

The Summer Lady Antoinette Holiday

“Gather ye rose buds while ye may”

“A kind good night to all”

The twins had refused to have any toasts assigned them, declaring they had quite enough to do without trying to make up speeches.

“Besides, we shall talk all the time, anyway,” said Clare. “We always do. You needn’t arrange any set pieces for us.”

By three o’clock the Holiday dining-room was in perfect order, the snowy linen and silver and china all set forth. The center piece was a bowl of clover, and at either end of the table stood the tall silver candlesticks with the rose-colored shades that Tony particularly loved.

“It’s lovely,” sighed Clare, standing back to admire the effect. “I do wish we could have had roses, though. The clovers are neat and appropriate, of course, but some-

how I'd have liked something a little more festive for the occasion."

"So would I," agreed her twin. "But it can't be helped. We've swamped all our fortunes in—you know what—and hothouse flowers cost like fury, even if we had any way of getting hold of them which we haven't." She glanced at the clock. "My goodness, girls! How are we ever going to wait until it's time to start dinner? Every blessed thing is done that can be done until the last minute."

"Oh, there is Mr. Maybury in his lovely great car!" exclaimed Tony, from the window. "I just wish he would ask us to go out in it."

Apparently it was one of those lucky days when you have only to wish for things to have them come true, for it wasn't three minutes before Dr. Phil stuck his head into the dining-room door to ask if the hostesses could take time for an automobile ride. Of course the hostesses could, and did, and very shortly the big car had stowed away every single "Knightsess," including Miss Marjorie, in its

capacious depths. Mr. Maybury was a college friend of the doctor's who was staying at the hotel down in the village and more than once before had appeared on the Hill and kidnapped the "Hillocks" whose society he apparently enjoyed. They certainly returned the compliment in full measure, and to-day decided he was nicer than ever and possessed of magic vision to know just when a diversion would be most welcome.

Poor Charley couldn't quite enjoy anything these days, because of that horrible obsessing fear of Phil's possible malefactions.

"Wish we'd locked up the dining-room the way we did the pantry," she whispered to her twin. "We're leaving a clear field for Phil. Oh, Clare, you don't think he would do anything, do you? I 'most wish we'd stayed at home, don't you?"

"And missed this ride? No, thank you. Do stop worrying about Phil. He wouldn't be as mean as that."

"I don't know," dubiously. "Phil will do a good deal when he gets started."

"You are getting to be a perfect goose on

that subject. Do stop talking about Phil and let me enjoy this ride if you can't."

Clare spoke with unusual testiness and her twin turned away with a tight feeling in her throat. Even Clare was against her. Everything was spoiled, just as she had said to Miss Marjorie. Thinking of Miss Marjorie revived the queer, horrid doubt, which had been bobbing up at intervals all day. "Falling in love with a quarrel!" What a disagreeable sound the words had! She was very quiet the rest of the drive.

It was nearly quarter of six when the "Ladies" bade Mr. Maybury good-by with many thanks for their delightful ride. Clare and Jean and Tony flew up the path and entered the Holiday kitchen by the side door. But Charley lingered a moment with Miss Marjorie.

"Miss Marjorie, I—I've been thinking," she faltered. "I'm going to ask the boys. I've been a goose, just as Clare says. I was wrong and everybody was right, especially you." And, without waiting for any response, Charley ran after the others.

Jean had just flung open the dining-room door as Charley entered.

“Oh,” she exclaimed, “girls, come here quick!”

Charley, with Tony and Clare close behind, rushed to the door and looked into the next room, hardly knowing what to expect. Certainly none of them expected what they saw. The clovers still had the place of honor in the center of the table but a little way to the left and right stood two tall vases, filled with exquisite pale pink roses. Delicate sprays of smilax lay in graceful festoons, here and there, and at each place was a tiny white crêpe paper basket, filled with pale pink and green and white mints, and with a clover or two twisted into the handle of each.

“Why, how lovely! Who ever could have done it?” wondered Tony.

Suddenly Charley stooped with an exclamation and picked up a boy’s pen-knife which lay on the window-seat, as if it had been left by accident.

“Phil!” was all she could say, and before the others entirely realized the force of her

exclamation, Charley plumped down on the seat and began to cry. "Oh, dear! And I've b-been so h-horrid," she sobbed.

"Never mind. Run over and ask him quick," urged Clare, taking command. "Tony, go ask Ted. I'll put in the two extra places."

Tony was already off but Charley paused long enough to wail, "I meant to ask 'em, anyway. I told Miss Marjorie I would. Oh, dear! Why didn't I do it sooner?"

"What difference does it make?" soothed her twin. "It's all right so long as all the tabloids get here in the end." And Clare busied herself rearranging the place cards to make room for the two more guests as Charley flew off to deliver her tardy invitation.

"I wish to goodness she had decided it sooner," admitted Clare to Jean as soon as Charley was beyond earshot. "We ought to have two more menus and place cards."

Jean smiled and went to the sideboard drawer from which she took a large envelope.

"Here you are," she said. "Like Tony, I

had a 'hunch.' At least, I hoped we might need 'em."

"Oh, Jean, you are a jewel!" as Clare hastily opened the package and drew out two menu cards and two dainty place cards, both decorated like the others on the table, with a tiny three-leaf clover, and one inscribed with the name, "Sir Philip Lambert," the other with, "Sir Edward Holiday."

Meanwhile Charley had sped across the street and, as it happened, ran square into Phil, who was coming out of the living-room just as she went in.

"Phil! Oh, Phil!" was all she could say, for a minute.

"Fill? Fill? What shall I fill?" laughed her brother. His tone was teasing but the sharp note which had been in it all the week had disappeared. "What's all this about?"

"About you. Mumsie, he fixed the dining-room so beautifully with roses and everything. And I've been so hateful! Phil, please, please, will you come to the banquet? I was going to ask you, anyway. Ask Miss Marjorie if I wasn't." Charley's words

fairly tumbled over each other in their haste to get out but Phil seemed to understand for all that.

“All right, Twinnie. ’Nuff said. I’ll come with pleasure, if you really want me, though I didn’t do it for that purpose. And see here, Charl, I’m sorry I plagued you about the play. Honest, I didn’t know it would upset you so, but, anyway, I guess it was one of the things better left undone,” he added with a twinkle. “You are asking Ted, too, I take it?” hastily as his sister looked as if she were about to burst forth again.

“Oh, yes. Tony’s inviting him, and Clare’s fixing the places. My goodness! I’d better fly back or there won’t be any banquet.” And she vanished as speedily as she had arrived.

Left alone, Phil met his mother’s eyes rather self-consciously.

“Well, I did get even, after all,” he said whimsically.

“You certainly did, in master fashion. One of the most efficient getting evens I ever

heard of," she smiled. "I suppose it's hardly fair to ask if this was the revenge you were plotting last night?"

He laughed and colored.

"I began to plot this one about nine thirty P. M. Up to that time the least said the better about my plots. You took an awful advantage of me, Mums. The most dastardly thing you can do is to tell me you trust me to be decent."

"I'll bet Phil put every cent he was saving for a new camera into those roses and things," Clare was saying at the moment, over across the street.

"Ted borrowed money from Uncle Phil and he's going to pay it back out of his allowance," volunteered Tony, who had managed to inform herself on several points.

"Mercy! Those boys will be sprouting wings next. How did they ever get the stuff here anyway?"

"Mr. Maybury got it for them in Gardner this morning. He brought them up this afternoon and smuggled them into the office. He and Uncle Phil were in the secret."

“Some secret! Girls, do taste these peas and see if they are salt enough. I’ve tasted until I ’most haven’t any tongue left.”

“You might get on faster if you hadn’t any of you any tongues,” remarked Jean somewhat caustically. “Do you realize it’s nearly half-past six? And we have to be ready and dressed by seven.”

At which uncompromising statement of facts the tongues subsided and the fingers flew faster in proportion.

Just as the tall “Grandfather clock” in the hall tolled the hour of seven, Tony danced down the stairs a vision of delight in her beruffled white gown, with her eyes starry with excitement and her cheeks more like “Jack” roses than ever.

“My stars!” muttered Dick, who chanced to be waiting at the foot of the stairs.

“Don’t I look nice?” And Tony proceeded to pirouette on the toes of her small pink satin slippers before the boy’s dazzled gaze. “My, but so do you,” she added, coming to a halt and giving him a comprehensive survey. She couldn’t help thinking what a

contrast he presented from the miserable, sick lad she had found in the hay loft not so many weeks ago.

He stared down at her gloomily, uncomfortably conscious of his "best clothes" and "store tie."

"Lord knows how I *look!* I *feel* like a trussed fowl," he admitted. "I've a mind to cut and run."

"You'll do nothing of the kind. You promised you'd never run away again. What makes you want to, anyway?" wondered Tony.

"I don't, exactly. But I'm plum scared. I haven't any idea how to behave at a banquet. I never went to one in my life."

"Neither did I," giggled Tony. "We are quite in the same boat, so cheer up. There come Phil and the twins and Miss Marjorie. Wherever are Ted and Larry?"

But just at that moment the boys came racing each other down the stairs, and Dr. Phil came out of the office, and the party being fully assembled marched gaily into the dining-room where the cooks became hostesses,

as Mary Anne Eliza now took charge of the kitchen end of the affair, assisted by her niece, Phyllis Esmeralda, whose services as maid had been bespoken for the occasion as another of "Granny's" contributions.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE BANQUET

It was a most delectable feast to which the Ladies of the Round Table had bidden the Knights. But even more satisfactory than the delicious food was the pervading atmosphere of peace and good will and happiness, all doubly grateful after the storm and stress of the past two weeks.

At last they came to the toasts and Dr. Phil opened the festivities by a funny speech which set them all laughing and in fine mood to receive whatever was to follow.

“We hear a great deal,” he concluded, “about the

‘days of old
When knights were bold,’

but I am inclined to think we don’t hear enough about the mothers and the wives and the sisters and the sweethearts who inspired

the knights to their deeds of prowess. I believe then, as now, there wouldn't have been much that was really worth while accomplished without that other better half of creation. So I give you the first toast of the evening—The Ladies—which will be responded to by Sir Laurence Holiday.”

Larry rose with his usually half languid ease and perfect self-possession. Watching him, Dr. Phil was forcibly reminded, once again, of the lad's father. How much alike the two were in so many ways! The outer similarity had always been marked but the essential likeness was beginning to show these days. “Please God, he'll make as fine a man,” thought the doctor. “He has it in him, I believe.”

“The Ladies—” began Larry deliberately. “It's a large subject. I'm afraid I'm not equal to handling it as it deserves. Anyway, the ladies speak for themselves. At least, the ladies I am acquainted with, do,” he added with a twinkle. “But there is another thing that speaks for itself and that's what we've had to eat to-night. I don't believe

any of those 'knights of old' ever sat down to a better feast than the one we've just been enjoying. I am sure I am expressing the sentiments of all the Knights of the Order here assembled when I say we are mighty glad to be here to-night with—the Ladies."

Amid the applause which greeted his concluding words, Larry stooped and lifted his glass from the table, waved it gallantly and raised it to his lips, a performance in which the rest followed his lead, as he sat down.

"Dear me, I never would have remembered the toast," sighed Clare. "It's a wonder I hadn't drunk my punch all up in my excitement. Wasn't that a dandy speech, Tony?" she leaned in front of Dick, at the end of the table, to ask of Antoinette, who sat next, between Dick and her uncle. "Sounds as if he'd been making 'em all his life," she added.

"He has," giped Tony, in revenge for her brother's "speak for themselves" hit, but she was immensely proud of Larry for all that.

"Hush." Clare put her fingers on her lips for Dr. Phil was speaking.

“Our next toast—The Round Table—Lady Jean Lambert,” introduced the doctor with a low bow.

Jean rose timidly, with a becoming flush in her cheeks and her eyes very bright. It was an entirely new experience for her to be called on to express her inmost thoughts before a group of eager, critical, young listeners.

“I can’t make a speech like Larry,” she began. “I don’t know how, and, anyway, I can’t joke about the Round Table. It means too much to me. It isn’t a play game. It’s real. Sometimes I think it’s the realest thing I’ve ever known. I’ve been trying to think just what the Round Table does mean and I think it’s mostly this—the togetherness of people. The Round Table is a whole and we are the parts. If any of the parts is false to the spirit of the whole, even in little ways, we’ve weakened the strength of the Order, as well as done ourselves harm. I don’t believe there’s one of us who hasn’t been ashamed of something he has done or said because it wasn’t quite in keeping with the Round Table and what it stands for. I don’t believe there

is one of us who hasn't tried a little, anyway, to live up to it. And I know there isn't one of us who isn't better for knowing its founder, Miss Marjorie Ericson."

It has been quite a speech after all. Jean had quite forgotten her shyness in the sincerity of her faith in what she was saying. As she slipped back into her seat, next to Miss Marjorie, she hardly dared to lift her eyes for fear she might meet some scoffing gaze. There was a moment's silence, then everybody applauded enthusiastically, and looking up at last, Jean somehow realized more than she had ever done the sense of that "togetherness" of which she had just spoken. She knew without need of words that they were all with her.

"Bravo, Jean," said Dr. Phil. "That was a fine speech and we second every word of it, especially the last sentence." The Toast Master smiled across at Miss Marjorie who sat opposite him, and something in his eyes made Jean turn quickly and look at her friend. There was the loveliest little flush on her cheeks, and her eyes, too, were alight with

something Jean had not seen there before. All of a sudden, a bewildering fancy struck her. Delight and wonder and jealousy danced a wild little circle in her mind for a moment. If it were true—this fancy of hers—it was beautiful, quite the nicest thing that could possibly happen, only it was awfully hard to surrender Miss Marjorie even to Dr. Phil. And then Jean felt Miss Marjorie's hand slip into hers behind Ted's back, and meeting her friend's eyes knew that nothing could make any real difference in their friendship. And then she realized that Phil was on his feet.

"I'm not scheduled to speak," Phil was saying, "because up to the last minute I expected not to be present, owing to affairs of state." He paused a moment and a faint ripple of amusement ran around the table. "Nevertheless," he continued, "here I am and only too glad to be here. I am requested by one of the Ladies—indeed I may say, *the* Lady, from whose mighty brain the plan of this banquet emerged like Minerva, full grown." He bowed to Charley, whose face

was scarlet. "I am requested to present, in behalf of the Round Table, this slight token of our good will and affection." And leaning across the table, Phil laid a small green box beside Miss Marjorie's glass.

With the pretty color still in her face, Miss Marjorie opened the box and drew forth a dainty little green enamel and gold pin, in the shape of a three-leaf clover, with a tiny pearl in the center.

"Speech! Speech!" called Dr. Phil.

She rose, and Jean thought she had never seen her look so lovely as she did at the moment, in her pale pink evening dress, with the light from the rose-colored candle shades on her delicately flushed cheeks and the happy shine in her eyes.

"Dear Knights and Ladies of the Round Table, first of all, let me thank you for this lovely and unexpected gift which I prize very highly, not only for itself but for what it stands for. I want to thank you, too, for all you have done to make my summer such a happy one. You know, I never had any brothers and sisters until I came here and

now I have so many.” She looked around the table with a smile which included every Knight and Lady. “You will be often in my thoughts when I go away and I know you will take extra good care to preserve the spirit of the Order because I ask it, though the honor of founding it belongs to Clare and not to me.”

She paused a moment to smile at Clare and then leaned forward to touch a pink rose which bent toward her as if it too were listening eagerly like the guests.

“The Round Table is Jean’s toast, not mine,” she went on. “But I feel as if I would like to add a word to what she said so finely a moment ago. A few days ago, even yesterday, I could not have been so sure of the stability of the Order as I am to-night. In fact, it looked as if there wasn’t much left of the Table but its pieces.” She smiled a little again and Charley and Phil both dropped their eyes rather hastily. “I could do no more to save it than Arthur could his own order. And sometimes I doubted if it had meant as much as I had liked to think it

had. And then, again, I told myself to wait and have faith. And to-night, as I have sat here with these roses before me, I know that the Table is real after all, just as Jean says. In behalf of the Ladies, especially, in behalf of *the* Lady, as Phil called her, I want to tell the Knights how loyally welcome they are, one and all. Let us drink then to—the Knights.”

And amid the applause which greeted the toast, Miss Marjorie found a chance to send a smile across the table, a smile which included Phil and Charley who sat side by side. And somehow that smile completed the mutual satisfaction of the two, and more than made up for any sacrifice of pride that had been made. If, between them, they had managed nearly to banish the spirit of the Round Table, between them they had managed to bring it back with renewed life.

Tony was next called on to respond to the toast, “The Summer,” and brought things back to lighter mood by a gay little speech, recalling the various frolics and adventures and quarrels and merry nonsense, which had made

the vacation days what they were, a season of happy memories.

As soon as she finished, Ted sprang up.

“I’m not scheduled to speak either,” he said. “But I’d like to say I’m glad I’m here. I didn’t want to be a Knight, and I guess I’m not much of a one so you’d notice it, but I think the Round Table’s a peach of a piece of furniture anyhow.”

And he sat down amid much approving applause.

“Good for you, Teddy,” said Miss Marjorie softly in his ear. “I hoped we were going to hear that.”

In the meantime Larry had risen.

“I’d like respectfully to call the attention of the Order to the fact that we have with us a gentleman who has not been formally dubbed Knight. To rectify which omission, I suggest that Richard Carson be admitted to the Round Table with all the responsibilities and privileges thereof.”

“Lawsy! What lovely words!” exclaimed Charley, softly.

“Even better than Lady G.’s,” chuckled

Phil, and they both giggled appreciatively. Lady G. was cast into the limbo of jokes at last.

“I second the motion,” Ted was saying heartily, apropos of his brother’s suggestion. And Tony’s eyes testified as to her delighted approval.

Dr. Phil noting the details with satisfaction was sure that at present none of his “guard-ees” was open to the charge of snobbishness. Larry had won his spurs on this account as well as on others.

Miss Marjorie had risen and crossing to where Dick sat, scarlet and confused, had bent over and fastened the clover blossoms from her own basket into his button hole.

“I dub you Knight of the Order, Sir Richard,” she said.

“Speech!” demanded Larry, as Miss Marjorie came back to her seat.

Nearly overcome by the situation, Dick managed to get to his feet.

“I can’t make no—any speech,” he stammered. “I’ve got a-plenty to say, all right, but I hain’t got the words. All I can say is

—thank ye.” And he sat down, wiping his perspiring brow with his napkin, in his embarrassment.

Everybody clapped madly and looked about for somebody to suggest some new ceremony or entertainment.

“Is there any other business to come before the Order?” asked the Toast Master. Everybody hoped there was but nobody knew what it could be. Dr. Phil shot a quick, questioning glance across the table and Miss Marjorie nodded. He rose and walked around the table to where she sat.

“I’m going to make a speech myself,” he said. “Knights and Ladies of this noble Order, I am sure you will agree with me when I say that no matter how firmly the Round Table stands on its four legs, there is danger of its upsetting unless its manager keeps her personal eye upon it. Therefore, I ask you to join with me in my satisfaction when I announce that Mrs. Phil Holiday, at present known as Miss Marjorie Ericson, and your humble servant, will be at home in the bungalow at the foot of the Hill any time after

October first. I pledge you—the bride of the Hill—Miss Ericson!” And as the dazed but delighted company raised their glasses to drink the toast he stooped and kissed his “lady love.”

And thus ended the banquet and the summer, for the next day was the first of September. And thus ends too, for the present, unless you ask for more, the tale of the happenings on Holiday Hill.

THE END

Selections from The Page Company's Books for Young People

THE BLUE BONNET SERIES

*Each large 12mo, cloth decorative, illustrated,
per volume \$1.50*

A TEXAS BLUE BONNET

By CAROLINE E. JACOBS.

"The book's heroine, Blue Bonnet, has the very finest kind of wholesome, honest, lively girlishness."—*Chicago Inter-Ocean*.

BLUE BONNET'S RANCH PARTY

By CAROLINE E. JACOBS AND EDYTH ELLERBECK READ.

"A healthy, natural atmosphere breathes from every chapter."—*Boston Transcript*.

BLUE BONNET IN BOSTON; OR, BOARDING-SCHOOL DAYS AT MISS NORTH'S.

By CAROLINE E. JACOBS AND LELA HORN RICHARDS.

"It is bound to become popular because of its wholesomeness and its many human touches."—*Boston Globe*.

BLUE BONNET KEEPS HOUSE; OR, THE NEW HOME IN THE EAST.

By CAROLINE E. JACOBS AND LELA HORN RICHARDS.

"It cannot fail to prove fascinating to girls in their teens."—*New York Sun*.

BLUE BONNET—DÉBUTANTE

By LELA HORN RICHARDS.

An interesting picture of the unfolding of life for Blue Bonnet.

THE YOUNG PIONEER SERIES

By HARRISON ADAMS

Each 12mo, cloth decorative, illustrated, per
volume \$1.25

THE PIONEER BOYS OF THE OHIO; OR, CLEARING THE WILDERNESS.

"Such books as this are an admirable means of stimulating among the young Americans of to-day interest in the story of their pioneer ancestors and the early days of the Republic." — *Boston Globe*.

THE PIONEER BOYS ON THE GREAT LAKES; OR, ON THE TRAIL OF THE IROQUOIS.

"The recital of the daring deeds of the frontier is not only interesting but instructive as well and shows the sterling type of character which these days of self-reliance and trial produced." — *American Tourist, Chicago*.

THE PIONEER BOYS OF THE MISSISSIPPI; OR, THE HOMESTEAD IN THE WILDERNESS.

"The story is told with spirit, and is full of adventure." — *New York Sun*.

THE PIONEER BOYS OF THE MISSOURI; OR, IN THE COUNTRY OF THE SIOUX.

"Vivid in style, vigorous in movement, full of dramatic situations, true to historic perspective, this story is a capital one for boys." — *Watchman Examiner, New York City*.

THE PIONEER BOYS OF THE YELLOW- STONE; OR, LOST IN THE LAND OF WONDERS.

"There is plenty of lively adventure and action and the story is well told." — *Duluth Herald, Duluth, Minn.*

THE PIONEER BOYS OF THE COLUMBIA; OR, IN THE WILDERNESS OF THE GREAT NORTHWEST.

"The story is full of spirited action and contains much valuable historical information." — *Boston Herald*.

BOOKS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

THE HADLEY HALL SERIES

By LOUISE M. BREITENBACH

*Each large 12mo, cloth decorative, illustrated, per
volume \$1.50*

ALMA AT HADLEY HALL

"The author is to be congratulated on having written such an appealing book for girls." — *Detroit Free Press*.

ALMA'S SOPHOMORE YEAR

"It cannot fail to appeal to the lovers of good things in girls' books." — *Boston Herald*.

ALMA'S JUNIOR YEAR

"The diverse characters in the boarding-school are strongly drawn, the incidents are well developed and the action is never dull." — *The Boston Herald*.

ALMA'S SENIOR YEAR

"Incident abounds in all of Miss Breitenbach's stories and a healthy, natural atmosphere breathes from every chapter." — *Boston Transcript*.

**THE GIRLS OF
FRIENDLY TERRACE SERIES**

By HARRIET LUMMIS SMITH

*Each large 12mo, cloth decorative, illustrated,
per volume \$1.50*

THE GIRLS OF FRIENDLY TERRACE

"A book sure to please girl readers, for the author seems to understand perfectly the girl character." — *Boston Globe*.

PEGGY RAYMOND'S VACATION

"It is a wholesome, hearty story." — *Utica Observer*.

PEGGY RAYMOND'S SCHOOL DAYS

The book is delightfully written, and contains lots of exciting incidents.

FAMOUS LEADERS SERIES

By CHARLES H. L. JOHNSTON

Each large 12mo, cloth decorative, illustrated, per
volume \$1.50

FAMOUS CAVALRY LEADERS

"More of such books should be written, books that acquaint young readers with historical personages in a pleasant, informal way." — *New York Sun*.

"It is a book that will stir the heart of every boy and will prove interesting as well to the adults." — *Lawrence Daily World*.

FAMOUS INDIAN CHIEFS

"Mr. Johnston has done faithful work in this volume, and his relation of battles, sieges and struggles of these famous Indians with the whites for the possession of America is a worthy addition to United States History." — *New York Marine Journal*.

FAMOUS SCOUTS

"It is the kind of a book that will have a great fascination for boys and young men, and while it entertains them it will also present valuable information in regard to those who have left their impress upon the history of the country." — *The New London Day*.

FAMOUS PRIVATEERSMEN AND ADVENTURERS OF THE SEA

"The tales are more than merely interesting; they are entrancing, stirring the blood with thrilling force and bringing new zest to the never-ending interest in the dramas of the sea." — *The Pittsburgh Post*.

FAMOUS FRONTIERSMEN AND HEROES OF THE BORDER

This book is devoted to a description of the adventurous lives and stirring experiences of many pioneer heroes who were prominently identified with the opening of the Great West.

"The accounts are not only authentic, but distinctly readable, making a book of wide appeal to all who love the history of actual adventure." — *Cleveland Leader*.

HILDEGARDE-MARGARET SERIES

By LAURA E. RICHARDS

Eleven Volumes

The Hildegard-Margaret Series, beginning with "Queen Hildegard" and ending with "The Merry-weather," make one of the best and most popular series of books for girls ever written.

Each large 12mo, cloth decorative, illustrated,

per volume \$1.25

The eleven volumes boxed as a set \$13.75

LIST OF TITLES

QUEEN HILDEGARDE

HILDEGARDE'S HOLIDAY

HILDEGARDE'S HOME

HILDEGARDE'S NEIGHBORS

HILDEGARDE'S HARVEST

THREE MARGARETS

MARGARET MONTFORT

PEGGY

RITA

FERNLEY HOUSE

THE MERRYWEATHERS

A-5

THE CAPTAIN JANUARY SERIES

By LAURA E. RICHARDS

Each 12mo, cloth decorative, illustrated, per
volume 50 cents

CAPTAIN JANUARY

A charming idyl of New England coast life, whose success has been very remarkable.

SAME. *Illustrated Holiday Edition* . . . \$1.25

SAME, FRENCH TEXT. *Illustrated Holiday*
Edition \$1.25

MELODY: THE STORY OF A CHILD.

SAME. *Illustrated Holiday Edition* . . . \$1.25

MARIE

A companion to "Melody" and "Captain January."

ROSIN THE BEAU

A sequel to "Melody" and "Marie."

SNOW-WHITE; OR, THE HOUSE IN THE WOOD.

JIM OF HELLAS; OR, IN DURANCE VILE, and a companion story, BETHESDA POOL.

NARCISSA

And a companion story, IN VERONA, being two delightful short stories of New England life.

"SOME SAY"

And a companion story, NEIGHBORS IN CYRUS.

NAUTILUS

"'Nautilus' is by far the best product of the author's powers, and is certain to achieve the wide success it so richly merits."

ISLA HERON

This interesting story is written in the author's usual charming manner.

THE LITTLE MASTER

"A well told, interesting tale of a high character."—
California Gateway Gazette.

DELIGHTFUL BOOKS FOR LITTLE FOLKS

By LAURA E. RICHARDS

THREE MINUTE STORIES

Cloth decorative, 12mo, with eight plates in full color and many text illustrations by Josephine Bruce.

Net \$1.25; carriage paid \$1.40

"Little ones will understand and delight in the stories and poems."—*Indianapolis News*.

FIVE MINUTE STORIES

Cloth decorative, square 12mo, illustrated . \$1.25

A charming collection of short stories and clever poems for children.

MORE FIVE MINUTE STORIES

Cloth decorative, square 12mo, illustrated . \$1.25

A noteworthy collection of short stories and poems for children, which will prove as popular with mothers as with boys and girls.

FIVE MICE IN A MOUSE TRAP

Cloth decorative, square 12mo, illustrated . \$1.25

The story of their lives and other wonderful things related by the Man in the Moon, done in the vernacular from the lunacular form by Laura E. Richards.

WHEN I WAS YOUR AGE

Cloth, 8vo, illustrated . \$1.25

The title most happily introduces the reader to the charming home life of Doctor Howe and Mrs. Julia Ward Howe, during the childhood of the author.

A HAPPY LITTLE TIME

Cloth, 8vo, illustrated . \$1.25

Little Betty and the happy time she had will appeal strongly to mothers as well as to the little ones who will have this story read to them, and appeal all the more on account of its being such a "real" story.

THE BOYS' STORY OF THE RAILROAD SERIES

By BURTON E. STEVENSON

Each large 12mo, cloth decorative, illustrated, per
volume \$1.50

THE YOUNG SECTION - HAND; OR, THE AD- VENTURES OF ALLAN WEST.

"A thrilling story, well told, clean and bright. The whole range of section railroading is covered in the story, and it contains information as well as interest." — *Chicago Post*.

THE YOUNG TRAIN DISPATCHER

"A vivacious account of the varied and often hazardous nature of railroad life, full of incident and adventure, in which the author has woven admirable advice about honesty, manliness, self-culture, good reading, and the secrets of success." — *Congregationalist*.

THE YOUNG TRAIN MASTER

"It is a book that can be unreservedly commended to anyone who loves a good, wholesome, thrilling, informing yarn." — *Passaic News*.

THE YOUNG APPRENTICE; OR, ALLAN WEST'S CHUM.

"The story is intensely interesting, and one gains an intimate knowledge of the methods and works in the great car shops not easily gained elsewhere." — *Baltimore Sun*.

"It appeals to every boy of enterprising spirit, and at the same time teaches him some valuable lessons in honor, pluck, and perseverance." — *Cleveland Plain Dealer*.

"The lessons that the books teach in development of uprightness, honesty and true manly character are sure to appeal to the reader." — *The American Boy*.

BOOKS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

THE LITTLE COLONEL BOOKS

(Trade Mark)

By ANNIE FELLOWS JOHNSTON

Each large 12mo, cloth, illustrated, per volume . \$1.50

THE LITTLE COLONEL STORIES

(Trade Mark)

Being three "Little Colonel" stories in the Cosy Corner Series, "The Little Colonel," "Two Little Knights of Kentucky," and "The Giant Scissors," in a single volume.

THE LITTLE COLONEL'S HOUSE PARTY

(Trade Mark)

THE LITTLE COLONEL'S HOLIDAYS

(Trade Mark)

THE LITTLE COLONEL'S HERO

(Trade Mark)

THE LITTLE COLONEL AT BOARDING-

(Trade Mark)

SCHOOL

THE LITTLE COLONEL IN ARIZONA

(Trade Mark)

THE LITTLE COLONEL'S CHRISTMAS

(Trade Mark)

VACATION

THE LITTLE COLONEL, MAID OF HONOR

(Trade Mark)

THE LITTLE COLONEL'S KNIGHT COMES

(Trade Mark)

RIDING

MARY WARE: THE LITTLE COLONEL'S

(Trade Mark)

CHUM

MARY WARE IN TEXAS

MARY WARE'S PROMISED LAND

These twelve volumes, boxed as a set, \$18.00.

A—9

SPECIAL HOLIDAY EDITIONS

Each small quarto, cloth decorative, per volume . \$1.25
New plates, handsomely illustrated with eight full-page drawings in color, and many marginal sketches.

THE LITTLE COLONEL

(Trade Mark)

TWO LITTLE KNIGHTS OF KENTUCKY

THE GIANT SCISSORS

BIG BROTHER

THE JOHNSTON JEWEL SERIES

*Each small 16mo, cloth decorative, with frontispiece
and decorative text borders, per volume . Net \$0.50*
**IN THE DESERT OF WAITING: THE LEGEND
OF CAMELBACK MOUNTAIN.**

THE THREE WEAVERS: A FAIRY TALE FOR
FATHERS AND MOTHERS AS WELL AS FOR THEIR
DAUGHTERS.

KEEPING TRYST: A TALE OF KING ARTHUR'S
TIME.

THE LEGEND OF THE BLEEDING HEART

THE RESCUE OF PRINCESS WINSOME:
A FAIRY PLAY FOR OLD AND YOUNG.

THE JESTER'S SWORD

THE LITTLE COLONEL'S GOOD TIMES BOOK

Uniform in size with the Little Colonel Series . \$1.50
Bound in white kid (morocco) and gold . Net 3.00
Cover design and decorations by Peter Verberg.

"A mighty attractive volume in which the owner may record the good times she has on decorated pages, and under the directions as it were of Annie Fellows Johnston." — *Buffalo Express*.

**THE LITTLE COLONEL DOLL BOOK—
First Series**

Quarto, boards, printed in colors \$1.50

A series of "Little Colonel" dolls. Each has several changes of costume, so they can be appropriately clad for the rehearsal of any scene or incident in the series.

**THE LITTLE COLONEL DOLL BOOK—
Second Series**

Quarto, boards, printed in colors \$1.50

An artistic series of paper dolls, including not only lovable Mary Ware, the Little Colonel's chum, but many another of the much loved characters which appear in the last three volumes of the famous "Little Colonel Series."

ASA HOLMES

By ANNIE FELLOWS JOHNSTON.

With a frontispiece by Ernest Fosbery.

16mo, cloth decorative, gilt top \$1.00

"'Asa Holmes' is the most delightful, most sympathetic and wholesome book that has been published in a long while." — *Boston Times*.

**TRAVELERS FIVE: ALONG LIFE'S HIGH-
WAY**

By ANNIE FELLOWS JOHNSTON.

With an introduction by Bliss Carman, and a frontispiece by E. H. Garrett.

12mo, cloth decorative \$1.25

"Mrs. Johnston broadens her reputation with this book so rich in the significance of common things." — *Boston Advertiser*.

JOEL: A BOY OF GALILEE

By ANNIE FELLOWS JOHNSTON.

12mo, cloth decorative, illustrated \$1.50

"The book is a very clever handling of the greatest event in the history of the world." — *Rochester, N. Y., Herald*.

THE BOYS' STORY OF THE ARMY SERIES

By FLORENCE KIMBALL RUSSEL

BORN TO THE BLUE

12mo, cloth decorative, illustrated . . . \$1.25

"The story deserves warm commendation and genuine popularity."—*Army and Navy Register*.

IN WEST POINT GRAY

12mo, cloth decorative, illustrated . . . \$1.50

"One of the best books that deals with West Point."—*New York Sun*.

FROM CHEVRONS TO SHOULDER- STRAPS

12mo, cloth decorative, illustrated . . . \$1.50

"The life of a cadet at West Point is portrayed very realistically."—*The Hartford Post, Hartford, Conn.*

DOCTOR'S LITTLE GIRL SERIES

By MARION AMES TAGGART

Each large 12mo, cloth, illustrated, per volume, \$1.50

THE DOCTOR'S LITTLE GIRL

"A charming story of the ups and downs of the life of a dear little maid."—*The Churchman*.

SWEET NANCY: THE FURTHER ADVENTURES OF THE DOCTOR'S LITTLE GIRL.

"Just the sort of book to amuse, while its influence cannot but be elevating."—*New York Sun*.

NANCY, THE DOCTOR'S LITTLE PARTNER

"The story is sweet and fascinating, such as many girls of wholesome tastes will enjoy."—*Springfield Union*.

NANCY PORTER'S OPPORTUNITY

"Nancy shows throughout that she is a splendid young woman, with plenty of pluck."—*Boston Globe*.

NANCY AND THE COGGS TWINS

"The story is refreshing."—*New York Sun*.

WORKS OF EVALEEN STEIN

THE CHRISTMAS PORRINGER

12mo, cloth decorative, illustrated by Adelaide
Everhart \$1.25

This story happened many hundreds of years ago in the quaint Flemish city of Bruges and concerns a little girl named Karen, who worked at lace-making with her aged grandmother.

GABRIEL AND THE HOUR BOOK

Small quarto, cloth decorative, illustrated and
decorated in colors by Adelaide Everhart . . . \$1.00

"No works in juvenile fiction contain so many of the elements that stir the hearts of children and grown-ups as well as do the stories so admirably told by this author."

— *Louisville Daily Courier*.

A LITTLE SHEPHERD OF PROVENCE

12mo, cloth decorative, illustrated by Diantha
H. Marlowe \$1.25

"The story should be one of the influences in the life of every child to whom good stories can be made to appeal." — *Public Ledger*.

THE LITTLE COUNT OF NORMANDY

12mo, cloth decorative, illustrated by John Goss \$1.25

"This touching and pleasing story is told with a wealth of interest coupled with enlivening descriptions of the country where its scenes are laid and of the people thereof."

— *Wilmington Every Evening*.

ELEANOR OF THE HOUSEBOAT

By LOUISE M. BREITENBACH.

12mo, cloth decorative, illustrated \$1.50

An unusually interesting story of how Eleanor Tracy spent a wonderful summer on a houseboat.

HISTORICAL BOOKS

THE BOYS OF '61; OR, FOUR YEARS OF FIGHTING.

By CHARLES CARLETON COFFIN.

Standard Edition. An entirely new edition, cloth decorative, 8vo, with nearly two hundred illustrations, \$2.00

Popular Edition. Cloth decorative, 12mo, with eight illustrations \$1.00

A record of personal observation with the Army and Navy, from the Battle of Bull Run to the fall of Richmond.

THE BOYS OF 1812; AND OTHER NAVAL HEROES.

By JAMES RUSSELL SOLEY.

Cloth decorative, 8vo, illustrated \$2.00

"The book is full of stirring incidents and adventures."—*Boston Herald*.

THE SAILOR BOYS OF '61

By JAMES RUSSELL SOLEY.

Cloth decorative, 8vo, illustrated \$2.00

"It is written with an enthusiasm that never allows the interest to slacken."—*The Call, Newark, N. J.*

BOYS OF FORT SCHUYLER

By JAMES OTIS.

Cloth decorative, square 12mo, illustrated . . . \$1.25

"It is unquestionably one of the best historical Indian stories ever written."—*Boston Herald*.

FAMOUS WAR STORIES

By CHARLES CARLETON COFFIN

Each cloth decorative, 12mo, illustrated, per vol., \$1.25

WINNING HIS WAY

A story of a young soldier in the Civil War.

MY DAYS AND NIGHTS ON THE BATTLEFIELD

A story of the Battle of Bull Run and other battles in Kentucky, Tennessee, and on the Mississippi.

FOLLOWING THE FLAG

A story of the Army of the Potomac in the Civil War.

THE SANDMAN SERIES

By WILLIAM J. HOPKINS

Each large 12mo, cloth decorative, illustrated, per volume \$1.50

THE SANDMAN: HIS FARM STORIES.

"Mothers and fathers and kind elder sisters who take the little ones to bed and rack their brains for stories will find this book a treasure." — *Cleveland Leader*.

THE SANDMAN: MORE FARM STORIES.

"Children will call for these stories over and over again." — *Chicago Evening Post*.

THE SANDMAN: HIS SHIP STORIES.

"Little ones will understand and delight in the stories and their parents will read between the lines and recognize the poetic and artistic work of the author." — *Indianapolis News*.

THE SANDMAN: HIS SEA STORIES.

"Once upon a time there was a man who knew little children and the kind of stories they liked, so he wrote four books of Sandman's stories, all about the farm or the sea, and the brig *Industry*, and this book is one of them." — *Canadian Congregationalist*.

STORIES OF NEWSBOY LIFE

By JAMES OTIS

Each 12mo, cloth decorative, illustrated, per volume \$1.25

JENNY WREN'S BOARDING HOUSE

A story of newsboy life in New York.

"The secret of the author's success lies in his wonderful sympathy with the aspirations of child-life, his truthful delineation of life among the children who act as his object lessons." — *New York Sun*.

TEDDY AND CARROTS; OR, TWO MERCHANTS OF NEWSPAPER ROW.

His newsboys are real and wide-awake, and his story abounds with many exciting scenes and graphic incidents.

WORKS OF MARSHALL SAUNDERS

Each large 12mo, cloth decorative, illustrated, per volume \$1.50.

BEAUTIFUL JOE'S PARADISE; OR, THE ISLAND OF BROTHERLY LOVE. A Sequel to "Beautiful Joe."

"This book revives the spirit of 'Beautiful Joe' capitally. It is fairly riotous with fun, and is about as unusual as anything in the animal book line that has seen the light." — *Philadelphia Item.*

'TILDA JANE

"I cannot think of any better book for children than this. I commend it unreservedly." — *Cyrus T. Brady.*

'TILDA JANE'S ORPHANS. A Sequel to "'Tilda Jane."

"It is written in the author's best vein, and presents a variety of interesting characters." — *New London Day.*

'TILDA JANE IN CALIFORNIA

The story is full of life and action, and troubles, which lead to character building, mingled with fun and cheerfulness, and is a wholesome book to put in the hands of girl readers.

PUSSY BLACK-FACE: THE STORY OF A KITTEN AND HER FRIENDS.

"This is one of Marshall Saunders's best stories, and Miss Saunders has an enviable reputation as a writer of animal life." — *Los Angeles, Cal., Express.*

THE STORY OF THE GRAVELYS

"The story is full of that refinement which appeals to the best taste. It takes for its motto Cardinal Gibbons's expression that 'A child's needless tear is a blood-blot on this earth,' and works out a beautiful and moving story." — *St. Louis Globe-Democrat.*

THE LITTLE COUSIN SERIES

(TRADE MARK)

Each volume illustrated with six or more full page plates in tint. Cloth, 12mo, with decorative cover, per volume, 60 cents

LIST OF TITLES

BY MARY HAZELTON WADE, MARY F.
NIXON-ROULET, BLANCHE McMANUS,
CLARA V. WINLOW, FLORENCE E.
MENDEL AND OTHERS

- | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Our Little African Cousin | Our Little Hungarian Cousin |
| Our Little Alaskan Cousin | Our Little Indian Cousin |
| Our Little Arabian Cousin | Our Little Irish Cousin |
| Our Little Argentine Cousin | Our Little Italian Cousin |
| Our Little Armenian Cousin | Our Little Japanese Cousin |
| Our Little Australian Cousin | Our Little Jewish Cousin |
| Our Little Austrian Cousin | Our Little Korean Cousin |
| Our Little Belgian Cousin | Our Little Malayan (Brown)
Cousin |
| Our Little Boer Cousin | |
| Our Little Bohemian Cousin | Our Little Mexican Cousin |
| Our Little Brazilian Cousin | Our Little Norwegian Cousin |
| Our Little Bulgarian Cousin | Our Little Panama Cousin |
| Our Little Canadian Cousin | Our Little Persian Cousin |
| Our Little Chinese Cousin | Our Little Philippine Cousin |
| Our Little Cuban Cousin | Our Little Polish Cousin |
| Our Little Danish Cousin | Our Little Porto Rican Cousin |
| Our Little Dutch Cousin | Our Little Portuguese Cousin |
| Our Little Egyptian Cousin | Our Little Russian Cousin |
| Our Little English Cousin | Our Little Scotch Cousin |
| Our Little Eskimo Cousin | Our Little Servian Cousin |
| Our Little French Cousin | Our Little Siamese Cousin |
| Our Little German Cousin | Our Little Spanish Cousin |
| Our Little Grecian Cousin | Our Little Swedish Cousin |
| Our Little Hawaiian Cousin | Our Little Swiss Cousin |
| Our Little Hindu Cousin | Our Little Turkish Cousin |

THE LITTLE COUSINS OF LONG AGO SERIES

The volumes in this series describe the boys and girls
of ancient times.

Each small 12mo, cloth decorative, illustrated 60c.

OUR LITTLE ATHENIAN COUSIN OF LONG AGO

By JULIA DARROW COWLES.

OUR LITTLE CARTHAGINIAN COUSIN OF LONG AGO

By CLARA V. WINLOW.

OUR LITTLE MACEDONIAN COUSIN OF LONG AGO

By JULIA DARROW COWLES.

OUR LITTLE NORMAN COUSIN OF LONG AGO

By EVALEEN STEIN.

OUR LITTLE ROMAN COUSIN OF LONG AGO

By JULIA DARROW COWLES.

OUR LITTLE SAXON COUSIN OF LONG AGO

By JULIA DARROW COWLES.

OUR LITTLE SPARTAN COUSIN OF LONG AGO

By JULIA DARROW COWLES.

OUR LITTLE VIKING COUSIN OF LONG AGO

By CHARLES H. L. JOHNSTON.

IN PREPARATION

OUR LITTLE POMPEIIAN COUSIN OF LONG AGO

A—18

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



00021176394

